WAIT! THE NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE WILL BE ST. VALENTINE'S NUMBER.

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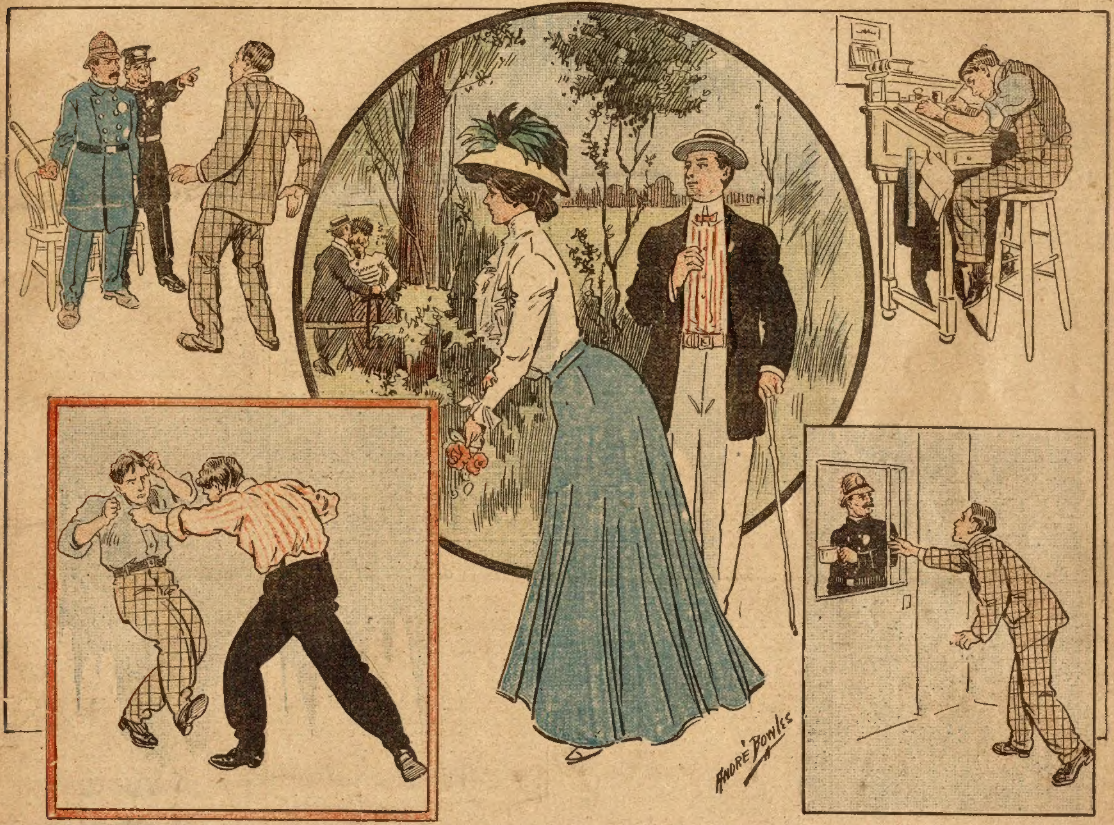

THE MILLS OF JUSTICE

By CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD

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CHAPTER I.

"Why did you do it, Forbes?" The Lieutenant's eyes were riveted on those of the prisoner.

"I didn't do it," answered the young man, stolidly. He had replied the same way for the past three hours.

"Why don't you own up, Forbes? You might as well. We've got it on you right. You did the job, and you know it."

"I didn't do it."

"You went to the house, walked in and deliberately shot the man, then disposed of the gun. You did it. I know. I've got the proof."

"I didn't do it."

The Lieutenant's eyes grew steely. It looked as though this prisoner would prove a hard case.

"If you come right out with it and confess, we'll make it easy for you with the State's attorney, but if you keep up this contrariness you'll get the limit. Now come on. Be reasonable."

Again came that even, steady voice:

"I didn't do it."

The Lieutenant sprang to his feet with an oath.

"Clancy," he called. "We'll see whether you'll confess or not," he added to the prisoner.

An officer entered just then, and the Lieutenant thundered:

"Take the prisoner to my private office. Lock him in."

Down the corridor the prisoner was led, and into a small, close room. Then Forbes knew what the "private office" meant. He was to be given the "Third Degree." The sweat-box ordeal. Glancing around, he saw that the room was bare, except for one chair, and this was occupied by the officer, who locked the door after him. Wearily Forbes leaned against the wall.

"Get offa that. Wanta dirty up th' paper?" jeeringly asked Officer Clancy.

"Oh, for God's sake be human," the young man cried. "You know I didn't do it and you are trying to——"

"Shut up!" yelled Clancy, but there was a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes. The prisoner's stony reserve had broken under the ordeal. It was becoming easier than it had looked to get a confession. The Lieutenant entering, unlocked the door with a latch-key, and brought a chair with him, in which he seated himself, leaned back and saw the gleam, and the agonized expression on the face of the prisoner. Leisurely he crossed his legs and drew a cigar from his pocket, tendering one to his companion official. Carefully lighting it, he gave a preliminary puff or two, then suddenly thundered:

"John Forbes, look at me!" His glare held the prisoner's eyes in spite of the latter's effort to look away.

"Why did you murder Judge Landers? What did you do with the gun? Why did you walk into his home and deliberately shoot him? Why did you leave the house and then return? Why? Why? Why?" The last three words were fairly shouted.

"You dirty, sneaking cur. You apology for an officer of justice"—shouted the prisoner in return.

A heavy blow sprawled him on the floor. Then Officer Clancy slipped his stick back in his belt and resumed his seat.

"Don't get fresh," he cautioned.

The prisoner regained his feet, his head swimming. He had heard of such things; had been told of criminals on the stand accusing officers of such brutal treatment, but had put it down in his mind as only an attempt of the prisoner to gain clemency at the hands of the jury. Wearily he put his hand to his head and leaned once more against the wall.

"Stand up straight," commanded the Lieutenant, and then in a different tone continued:

"Look here, Forbes. Why do you bring this on yourself? You know you might as well give up. You have made a good bluff, but it won't go, we'll get you anyway. I hate to treat you this way, but I must do my duty."

"Yes," Forbes answered sarcastically, "your duty! You don't know what the word 'duty' means, Dustin. You seem to think that duty consists of taking in an innocent man and beating and bulldozing out of him a confession of an act he never committed. Duty—bah!"

"Take him downstairs, Clancy," ordered the Lieutenant, and the prisoner experienced a curious sinking of his heart as he was led through narrow, iron-barred corridors. Curious faces peered at him from dimly-lighted cells, and once a drunken woman of the streets raised her voice in maudlin laughter as she noticed the youth and good looks of the lad.

"In you go," announced Clancy, as he pushed the prisoner into a small cell. "See you later," he added, leering cruelly.

"Say, officer," called Forbes quickly. "Can't a man get a drink of water?" Then as an inspiration struck him, he added: "You know I have money. It's up in the Lieutenant's office. It was taken from me when I was searched. I'll make it all right with you."

The officer laughed coarsely:

"I reckon the 'Loot' will take care of any loose change he happens to find around, Bo. I'll bring a drink after a while, though," and he walked slowly down the corridor.

Forbes glanced around his cell curiously, and, his eyes becoming accustomed to the darkness, made out a small bare bench on the further side. The cell was lighted only by the faint glimmer that came from a sputtering gas jet far down the corridor; the place smelled moldy, and the stone wall in the rear felt damp and slimy to the prisoner's touch. In spite of this he was so tired that it was almost with a sigh of gratification that he stretched himself on the bench and was already in a doze, when a piercing scream split the ghastly silence.

"God!" he gasped as he sprang from the bench. Then he laughed nervously. "They've got me going all right. Oh, for a drink of water!"

He licked his dry lips feverously and again stretched himself on the rough bed. In a moment he was disturbed. It was Clancy speaking to him.

"Here's something to eat, Bo," that worthy said as he pushed a plate of course food into the prisoner. "Eat hearty."

"Did you bring that drink, man?" Forbes asked eagerly. It as least appeared that they did not intend to starve him.

"Oh, yes—that drink. I forgot about that. I'll bring that in a minute," Clancy returned, again walking away, but glanced back to add:

"You better eat, though, seein' as I've took the trouble to get it for you."

Forbes looked at the plate with an expression of disgust. Still, as the officer had said, he might as well eat while the food was there. After the first mouthful or two, the coarse baked beans and pork rind, and the soggy, heavy all-wheat bread, seemed quite palatable, for he found how hungry he was. His thirst, however, was becoming frightful, and it seemed to increase with each mouthful of food. Not until he had eaten all, did he realize that the food had been heavily salted. Tossing the plate from him, he once more fell back on the evil-smelling bench and tried to forget himself in sleep. Tossing about, though, he asked himself why it was that Clancy had not brought the water, for he had been willing enough about the food. The lad's tongue was fairly protruding from his mouth, and in vain he tried to moisten his parched lips. Breathing painfully, he at last managed to slip into a slight nap, but was immediately awakened. He asked himself why he could not sleep, and what that sharp pain meant in his side. The experiences of the day were too much for him, and his eyes closed again, but even that consolation was denied him, for as often as he managed to forget for a moment, he was awakened, and once he fancied he saw a pole pulled quickly from between the bars of his cell door.

Then he suddenly heard the sound of running water, and a face appeared framed in the door. It was that of Clancy, and in the shining search-light of a watchman's electric dark-lantern, all the brutal, repulsive features of the man's face stood out strikingly. In his hand was a large tumbler, and in that tumbler, which he raised slowly and gloatingly to his large, red mouth, was water. Cool, sparkling, clear, delicious water! Forbes watched, fascinated, as the glass went slowly to the officer's mouth, from the corners of which tiny rivulets of water trickled and splashed to the floor. Then all the hellish ingenuity of the proceeding suddenly penetrated the brain of the prisoner. The food, so willingly given, had been prepared to heighten his thirst; the officer had prevented him sleeping, so he would yield.

"What is it they want me to do?" he asked himself, looking fascinated at the cool, sparkling water. "A confession obtained by these means won't hold, anyway," he told himself, and as Clancy produced another tumbler with real water in it, he threw himself forward against the grating. It was better to confess than to famish. Here was water! He must have it.

And so it was that the evening papers printed extras containing the sensational confession obtained from John Forbes of his murdering his employer, the late Judge Landers, and Lieutenant Dustin received high commendation as to his efficiency and ability.

CHAPTER II.

It was a delightful afternoon, and Saturday at that, and State street was thronged with happy-faced young people hurrying from offices, stores and wholesale establishments, for it was just one o'clock and a half holiday.

Perhaps they were all the more delighted in that it was the first of the summer, and a June Saturday when it does not rain, presents so many possibilities. Then, after it comes Sunday, and there is no more work to do until Monday morning. To fully enjoy all this, one has to be young and hard-working, and Jack Forbes and Jennie Baker were both, although neither had heard of the other, as they happened to walk in step with the crowd of fellow workers. It is possible that their life lines would never have crossed had not one of those terrible drays turned suddenly into an alley way, creating a mimic panic, and forcing a closely packed crowd back on these two young people. Jack had been hoping for a raise, and studying how he could get one, honestly and fairly, while Jennie's mind was filled with a very large sale she had made just before the closing hour, and so both had their heads in the clouds, until that wave of humanity swept back, bearing little Jennie off her feet, when instinctively she clutched the arm nearest her, while Jack, not pausing, drew her to his side, and let the force of the impact break against his own body.

In a minute, it was all over, but both realized that if Jack had not been right there, the evening papers would have had another "Horrible Accident," to record, for Jennie was so small, and the crowd determined to recede to a place of safety.

"Thanks," Jennie said a little breathlessly.

"Oh, don't mention it," Jack said, feeling suddenly very bashful, and wishing he had the graceful manner of his friend, Phil Houston.

"But it was worth something—that is if I'm worth anything," Jennie insisted, much more self-possessed than he.

"Oh, of course. Sure, I meant that. I mean that—I meant—oh, I say, you know, don't you, that it was nothing for me to do. Any fellow'd done the same. You see, I just saw it was a little girl falling. Honestly, I don't know how to say it, but I guess you know what I mean."

He was in a frantic state by that time, and stammered and spluttered, although no one had ever affected him before. Fortunately Jennie extracted him from his confusion by replying in her quiet way:

"Of course I do. You feel that it was but a customary courtesy you would render any one smaller than yourself, but as I never had one pick me up from under the jaws of death, etc.," by this time she was laughing, and he, too, and suddenly they felt that they were friends. If Jennie had waited to ask advice from some of the gentlemen who conduct the love-answers columns in the daily papers, she would have been told that never does a young lady make the acquaintance of a gentleman, save through a third person, who does the proper introducing. However, Jack and Jennie were not so far off, for a third person played his part, Cupid, for, not to deceive the reader, this was a case of love at first sight.

Jennie was a nice, wholesome girl, who earned her living working in a large department store, selling hosiery. Jack was a first-class fellow, who was doing well, except as to salary, in the wholesale leather house of Landers, Blake & Co., the senior member of which was Judge Landers, for some years retired from the bench.

Having exchanged names, Jack asked pleasantly, his smile showing exquisitely white teeth:

"Where are you going this afternoon?"

"Out to Washington Park to listen to the band concert."

"How'd you like to go to the ball game?"

Jennie shook her head. He was too new a friend for that. "I think I will go to the park."

"Do you mind if I go along?" Jack persisted.

"I suppose I can't stop you," she retorted, and then came more laughing, although Jack said a little gravely:

"Yes, you can. Just say you don't want me, and that's enough."

No one had ever shown such consideration for her before, and Jennie appreciated it. "I want you to come," was her quiet reply, but she refused to go to lunch with him first, saying he could share the lunch she was carrying; and they took an elevated train, and rode around the loop so as to get good seats.

Both had been to Washington Park before, and had eaten somewhat crushed lunches packed in pasteboard boxes, washed down with pop and followed with fruit, but this one was the best any one could imagine. They watched some of the ball playing, and Jack explained technical points, and repeated his invitation for the National game, but again she shook her head. Still she smiled and it was then that Jack thought to ask her where she lived. When she told him, he gave a shout that made quite a number look around, and Jennie to blush furiously.

"Why, say, Miss Baker, I live a block from you," and that cemented their friendship. They had plenty of friends in common, and one of Jennie's friends, Kittie Nelson, had offered to invite a new young man to her house to meet Jennie, and this new young man had been Jack.

"Know Phil Houston?" Jack asked.

"Yes," she said slowly. Evidently she did not consider Phil a desirable reference.

"What's the matter? Don't you like him? Most girls do," Jack rattled on, feeling a little proud that here was one whom the exquisite Phil had not attracted.

"I don't," Jennie said, with a cunning little pursing of the lips.

"Why don't you? At the office they call him a Jim Dandy, he dresses so fine. He's a nephew of the Judge, you know?"

"Oh, yes, I know. Every one does who has talked with him ten minutes," Jennie said, with a toss of the head, then said almost pleadingly:

"Don't let's talk of him any more. I hate him. I wish he'd stay away from us girls. He just goes about with us, and then makes fun of us. We girls are all better without him," and she sighed, then with an effort turned a smiling face toward him, saying gaily:

"The band's beginning, come on," and for the minute Jack forgot everything but the happiness of the afternoon, the presence of the charming girl, and the music which he enjoyed. It was a treat to these two, who, confined all week at their work, could now enjoy the music and fresh air and sunshine.

All things do end, even a Saturday afternoon, and Jack and Jennie felt a sad happiness as they sauntered toward the elevated.

"It's bully to think of you so near," Jack said, as he helped the little girl up the long stairs, wishing he were permitted to carry her up and save her the fatigue.

"It is nice," Jennie admitted.

"Then I may see you again?" Jack asked, slipping the two nickels to the agent, and guarding Jennie from any chance blow from the turnstile.

"I would like to have you come and see me, but I haven't any place to see you," Jennie faltered.

"Never mind, it's summer and there are a thousand places to go to."

A bright light looked out from the blue eyes of the girl, but she hesitated.

"Excuse me, if you have other company," Jack said awkwardly, and wondering at the depressed feeling stealing over him.

"No, there is no one else," she returned slowly.

"Then let me come for you tomorrow. You wouldn't go to lunch or dinner with me, but have dinner with me tomorrow, and we'll go somewhere nice tomorrow night—anywhere you say."

Again the girl's cheeks flushed. "I always go to church in the evenings. They all seem too fine for me in the mornings, so I go at night."

Jack's face softened, and he asked in a low tone:

"If you'll let me go with you, we will go there tomorrow night, after dinner;" and Jennie smiled at him from under her hat brim.

After that they exchanged notes with regard to biographies, and were deeply immersed in them when they reached the dreary boarding house where Jennie had a very small hall bedroom.

So absorbed were they that they did not notice the approach of a fine appearing, well-dressed young man, and were startled when he called out:

"This is one on me. You two acquainted; By golly, and I've been planning to make you two know each other," and he held out his well-kept hands, on each of which was a diamond, his left to Jennie, the right to Jack.

"Well, Phil Houston!" cried Jack, forgetting in his surprise what Jennie had said. In a moment he remembered, but she had demurely released the hand the newcomer had seized with his left, and in a low tone said:

"Good-night," then vanished.

"Nice girl," Houston said as she disappeared.

"Well, I should say yes," Jack said as though in a daze, wondering how he could tide over until he called for her, and if it would be ill-mannered to call for her early enough to go for a car ride.

"Pretty well hit?" asked Phil, slipping his arm through Jack's.

Jack tried to laugh his way out of it, but his companion would have nothing of it, explaining:

"My dear boy, I know all about it. Went loco over her. Honest. Cut out cigarettes; not only climbed on the water wagon, but drove it for two whole weeks; even went to church with her, and then she said she was only trying to convert me. Have your little day of being converted. No more for me. She's a nice girl, but mine has to have a little ginger in her. I say, let's stop at Mulcathy's and bowl."

Jack hesitated a moment, then shook his head. "Have some letters to write," he said slowly. He did not know that she disapproved of bowling, but he wanted to be sure.

Phil burst out laughing. "Going the same road I traveled. All right, if you can keep up the pace. It's a good thing sometimes to be straight for a week or two," and lighting a cigarette, he strolled away, leaving Jack muttering to himself as he went to dinner.

"I never saw a girl like her before, but she's all right; yes, sir, she's all right."

CHAPTER III.

"Going to stay and work overtime tonight, Forbes?" asked Phil one evening several weeks after Jack's meeting with Jennie. "'Cause if you're not, we'll walk home. It's a swell day."

"No, I'll not stay tonight, Phil. I've not got those books caught up yet, but that's not my fault. Doggone it! The old man's got it in his noodle that he has to cart all those papers home with him every afternoon, and it seems that I never get a chance at them."

Jack was slipping on his street coat now, and as they left the offices, Phil remarked:

"The Judge is kind of bugs about those papers. And d'you notice he always takes the cash home, too? I guess it's his old-fashioned way of doing business that he never seems to be able to get out of."

"I didn't know he took the cash home," Jack said carelessly. "Does seem kind of old-fashioned though, doesn't it?"

"Yeh. He's getting fierce and testy, too. I hit him for a raise the other day, but he couldn't see it. Says when he was my age he was glad enough to get half what I am getting now."

"He is getting crusty, that's a fact, Phil," Jack said smilingly. "You're not the only one that asked for more money. He ran me out of gas the other day," he chuckled.

"You're not getting as much as you should, Jack. I don't see how you keep yourself in beer money. If I wasn't for a touch from my aunt occasionally, I'd be broke all the time—and I'm getting more than you."

"Well, Phil," Jack said, laughing, "you see you like to have more of a good time with the girls than I care for. They certainly do like you, eh, boy?"

"While there's only one Jill for you, hey, Jack? Oh, no, now," Phil added with a chuckle, as a red flush spread over his companion's face. "Don't get sore. I've seen how it's been going, and I'm glad. She's a fine kid, Jack."

"Phil, she's great! You know I've never known a mother, and she's the first girl I've ever—well—ever wanted to go with. It's funny, but none of the others I know look good to me. Now, there's Kitty Nelson," he added reflectively, "as nice a girl as you'd want to see anywhere. But it's not the same."

"Kitty's all right, too," Phil said smiling. "And she thinks pretty much of a certain young gentleman I know of, if looks count for anything."

"Get out, you," Phil answered, as he sifted some tobacco into a cigarette paper. "Don't you ever believe it. Kitty's a nice girl and as straight as a string, but she likes a good time, that's all. You know what I mean; theater, White City, dances and such. I don't believe, though, the she ever thought two thinks about a fellow."

"I ain't so sure of that, Phil," Jack said doubtfully. "I'm no spring chicken, boy."

"Far be it from such, old man. But here's Coughlin's. Let's go in and have something."

"I'm still on the water wagon, Phillie boy," Jack said as he leaned against the bar. "But I'll have a little ginger ale with you."

Phil glanced at his companion sharply, but the frown that started to his face was quickly replaced with a smile, and he jokingly remarked:

"Old Jack Forbes was a jolly good lad,
But now he's sober as a Quaker.
The dough he used to love to spend
He's saving now for a Baker."

"Gee—that's fierce, Phil," Jack remarked, and then he suddenly became serious. "But, on the square, old man, I'd rather you didn't talk that way in here—about her, I mean. It seems kind of out of place."

"Why, sure, old-timer. I was thoughtless. Excuse me. Here's Cassidy," he added as a policeman entered. "Hello, John."

"Hello, Philip, me bye. How's the laad?"

"If I felt much better I couldn't stand it. What're you drinking?"

"Oh, a wee bit o' whuskey, won't hurt, Andy," he remarked to the bartender. "Oi jist come in from Terrence Downey's funeral, and a gra-and wan it was, sure. Th' byes all tur-rned out in unyfarm. Uh-huh, out to Calvary. Yeh shud o' seen Dugan. 'Twas rainin' a wee bit, and sivral o' us hov our overcoats with us, but whin we wint to th' house we hod to take thim off. Well, th' firrst thing I sees is a bottle o' Hennessy Three Star standin' in th' cupboard, and whin no wan is watchin' I sneaks to it, and sure it was mine. Now it filt kinda uncomfortable in the coat tails, so Oi says to meself, Oi'll put it in me rain coat. An' so Oi does, or thinks I does. Whin Oi wint to get it, 'twas gone. About an hour afterwards we begins lookin' fer Dugan, he bein' wan o' the pall-bearers. An' we finds him. He was a dom foine sight. In his hand is th' empty bottle o' Hennessy. Be hivvins Oi'd put th' same in his pocket instid of me own!

"'Tis a foine thing to hov frinds, John,' he says to me.

"'Right ye are there, Malachi,' I answers him, and no more would Oi say."

"You'd get an awful kidding at the station if they knew about that, John," Phil said, laughing heartily.

"Sure, Oi know thot. Well—so-long, byes," the officer said. "Wait a wee minit, though," he added, hesitating, "Could Oi spake to ye on wan side, Phillie?"

"Certainly, John," Phil answered, and walked with the policeman to a table in the rear.

"Have a cigar, Jack?" the proprietor asked, pushing a box toward him.

The young man shook his head.

"I'm afraid you'll find me a rather unprofitable customer, Andy," he laughed. "I cut out smoking, too."

"Well, I guess it'll do you more good than harm. Did you hear the news about Cricket, though? His kid's dead."

Jack's eyes expressed his sympathy.

"Ain't that h——l, now?" he asked slowly.

"Yep. Died this morning about three o'clock. Cricket is something fierce. You can't go near him with a ten-foot pole. Between his grieving and brooding he's got himself all shot to pieces. And drink—oh, my Albert! He stood here this noon and takes twelve straight hookers of booze, one right after the other. I never saw the like. And he's doing that in every place he hits, too, they say. He'll go nuts if some one don't slow him up."

"What'd the kid die of, Andy?" Jack asked soberly.

"Pneumonia, they said, but I reckon 'Starvation' is a better word. You know how it was. Cricket was making good money at the brickyard when that damn-fool strike had to come along. Cricket tried like a good fellow to get another job, but it seemed that there were too many looking for the same thing. Cricket and Mamie had bought their furniture on the installment plan, and when the payments stopped they lost it. God knows, time and again I tried to get Cricket to borrow some from me, but, no sir! He was going to pull through or bust. He bust. The kid got sick, and then he got some sense and let Mamie take him to Casey's, but then it was too late."

The bartender lit his cigar.

"And just to show you how things go sometimes—Cricket had just got a good job, seventy-five per, two days before. I don't know, but I suppose he'll lose that in a day or so."

Jack hardly heard the last at all. He was thinking of little Mamie Casey as he had known her, and unconsciously the image in his mind changed from the ruddy-cheeked, saucy, black-haired, black-eyed Mamie Casey, to a slight, shy, wavy-haired little creature, clinging tremblingly to his arm as a drayman's heavy team rushed by.

The thin glass in his fingers crashed and tinkled on the floor, and a gasp escaped his lips as he put the last image in the present trial of poor Mamie Casey.

"What's the matter, Jack?" the bartender asked quickly, "sick?"

"Oh, it's nothing," Jack laughed. "Don't think that because I'm not drinking I'm trying to do the Carrie Nation act on you," and as the bartender swept the pieces of glass into the dust-pan after Jack's leave, he murmured to himself:

"Another good boy gone wrong."

CHAPTER IV.

"Say, Jen, ain't them ball dresses swell? The ones in the window, I mean," Kittie Nelson whispered to Jennie Baker as the two stood behind the hosiery counter one dull day in January.

"I didn't look," Jennie returned wearily, then was forced to lean back and support herself as she coughed violently.

"Stop that cough, ore we'll all be wearing black," Kittie said, her eyes bright with unshed tears, slipping some horehound candy in her friend's hand, and asking with her counter manner, of two ladies who were pulling down the well arranged pile of stockings she and Jennie had spent half an hour in tastefully displaying to best advantage:

"Is there anything I can do for you, madam?"

One of them stared through her lorgnette, the other simply gave another disturbing flirt to the goods, and the two strolled away, enthusiastically telling each other how much better stock was carried by a rival store.

Kittie looked after them, and her thoughts were not very complimentary to them, but as a charming appearing lady approached, she called:

"Jennie, will you wait on this lady, I'm busy with stock?" kindly giving a sure buyer to Jennie, for she wanted the girl to turn in a good book just now when she was coughing, for she well knew that unless she was making excellent sales her position

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would be filled. Employers and customers do not like to hear such coughing.

Jennie came forward, smiling, and the lady said cordially:

"I'm glad to have you Jennie, for you can always suit me."

"You are so easy to wait upon, Mrs. Landers," Jennie answered, and was delighted when the big lady of her neighborhood, the wife of the Judge, gave her a big order.

"I wish you could wait upon me for men's hosiery, for I want to get some for the Judge, and I though I would send a box to my nephew, Phil, young men like silk hosiery just about as well as anything, don't you think, my dear?"

The soft blue eyes of little Jennie clouded, and she looked more slender and delicate than ever, and good Mrs. Landers noticed and thought, as she had many times before, that it was a shame that nice, pretty young girls like Jennie did not marry and fill the place for which they were intended.

It was this that made her say kindly:

"Give up this downtown life, my dear girl, and marry a good man who will take care of you. The excitement of working in a store is not good for any of you, and it spoils you for a domestic life."

Jennie felt herself quivering from head to foot, so indignant was she, and in her effort to restrain herself, and keep from coughing, she nearly strangled, but finally she managed to say in a very low tone:

"I don't like working down here. I want to get married."

"Then why don't you?" asked the astonished Mrs. Landers.

"Because we can't afford it," Jennie said, her face flaming scarlet, for it seemed as though she was finding fault with Jack.

"Nonsense, my dear, nonsense! What does for one will do for two. If your young man supports himself, he can you. To begin with, you do not need fine things. Begin in one room if necessary. I suppose you won't, and will grow all faded and he will marry some one else. Take my advice and get married and do not ask for finery," and she went away, honestly believing that she had done the very best for the girl who interested her. In her sheltered life she knew nothing of the real life of the girls who waited upon her, save what she read in the papers and heard at her clubs.

Kittie, having repaired the damage done by the two near-customers, waited upon several others, but her sharp ears had heard every word, and she gave Jennie a comforting pat on the shoulder as she passed behind her to get some other varieties.

Sick, bursting with indignation, Jennie had learned enough control to go along, attending to the wants of her customers, and the amount of her sales, so well augmented by Mrs. Landers, was piling up, as she and Kittie left the floor for their lunch half-hour.

"Good book today?" Kittie asked genially.

"Fine, but, oh, Kit, did you hear her? I want finery?" Tears were in the eyes, a sob quivered in the broken voice, but Kit brought her up standing:

"Now, see here, girlie, you ain't to think of that. I heard it all. She meant all right, but you see she doesn't know. Them folks don't. Gee, I wish they did have some of it. Begin in one room? That shows just how much she knows. Why, to begin in one room is just what respectable people can't these days. Never mind, now, we'll laugh over it tonight. Yes, tonight brace up a bit, for Jack is coming for you, and Phil for me, and we are to have dinner and go to a play, a vaudeville. Well, if you want, you and Jack can take seats way back, and have a chat," and Kit laughed.

"How'd you know?" Jennie asked slowly. Things happened very often that she did not understand, especially lately since she had caught her terrible cough.

"Phil 'phoned me while you were busy selling those 'seconds' to that country girl," Kit said gaily, forgetting that a year ago, she, too, was a country girl, just arrived in Chicago to better her fortune.

"I tried to make her understand that they were not the best quality," Jennie said seriously, "but she would buy them."

The two girls entered the lunchroom for employes, where an inferior grade of food was served at trifling prices.

As they entered, Kit said resolutely: "A good, strong soup and coffee for you, girlie."

"I just want the coffee," Jennie pleaded, but Kit did the ordering, reminding her in a whisper:

"Remember, we don't have to pay for dinner tonight," and with a blush on her face, Jennie ate her lunch, struggling with her cough.

Looking back, as she sat there in the noisy room, Jennie felt wearily that all the sunshine had fled with the summer. As long as it had been warm, she and Jack had enjoyed themselves, for there were many places for them to go, where they could enjoy the air and be together. In winter it was so different. They were truly and honestly in love, and looked forward to their marriage, as soon as they had enough money. Jennie was too proud to allow Jack to spend a penny upon her, save for some kind of entertainment, and as her salary was so small, she was forced to lodge in a house where she was not allowed any use of the parlor, so had no place to receive him. In vain did he beg that she permit him to help her a little, so she could be better lodged, but she felt it would be wrong.

They met whenever they could, but Jennie was a quiet, modest little thing, and would not let Jack take her to expensive theaters or restaurants, and she never attended dances, that place of meeting was not theirs. They were unhappy. This was before she caught her cold, which was growing upon her, and for a reason she was too proud to confess. Her shoes were entirely worn out, and in places her stockings were upon the ground. She had confessed it to no one, but Kittie had found out the day before and written Jack about it. He had called her up, not Phil, and arranged for that evening's meeting, so the two of them, he and Kit, could plan something. Phil was always ready to form a fourth, for Kittie's pertness and careless nonsense amused him.

Jennie was struggling once more with a rasping feeling in her throat when she came back to the floor, and truth to tell, her eyes were glazed with fever so that she attended to her duties almost mechanically, yet so well trained was she that no one noticed any difference but Kit, and her sales were very large.

Except that she feverishly seized upon every opportunity to see Jack, she would have begged to be allowed to go straight home, but that thought braced her, and when she looked into his dark, lean face, so dear to her, she whispered:

"It's good to see you, Jack."

"God! Jennie, it's hard to keep away from you," he returned, realizing how wan she was and how deep the cough was seated.

"How's things?" he asked as soon as he could control his voice, for these two were not sentimental. There was no need for many words. Both understood.

"Fine. I had a big day."

"That's good."

"Yes, as long as I can make sales they'll keep me, but if I don't stop coughing they'll fire me," and she sighed hoarsely.

Then she reproached herself, for she could feel the muscles grow tense in Jack's arm, and knew how it hurt him that he could not shield her from everything, and she longed with the weary fever of her cold, to just rest against his shoulder and stop trying.

Phil and Kit, laughing, teasing each other and fairly shedding fun, led the way to a large, gaily lighted restaurant, the warmth and brightness of which were very grateful to the sick girl, and seemed to be a stimulant to Kit.

Phil led the way to a table in the corner away from the drafts, and as they seated themselves, asked cordially:

"What do we begin with?"

"We girls are cold and tired, give us some hot milk," Kit said decidedly, wishing she could induce Jennie to have a mouthful of whisky to soothe her cough.

"And you?" Phil asked looking at Jack.

"Milk, too, only make mine cold," Jack replied, and Phil, with his half laugh, said, glancing at the three:

"Golly, but a temperance crowd! Well, make it two hot and one cold milk, and a Scotch highball," then turned toward Jennie and forced her into a conversation.

Jennie had been placed in the corner seat, nearer Phil than Jack, and as she drew back, to avoid the former, she could not hear the low conversation carried on by the latter and Kit.

"I tell you it's true."

"Why, it will be her death."

"I know it, and yet, Jack, you don't know how she is. Just as proud as the richest. Won't bunk with me for fear I won't let her pay as much as me."

"Don't I know, Kit, but she's killing herself. Her feet on the ground! It's awful!"

"She won't take the money from me," Kit continued, watching Phil, whom she had ordered to keep talking to Jennie.

"And she won't from me," Jack said sorrowfully.

Suddenly Kit smiled joyously, and little Jennie wondered with a heart-sick feeling if Jack realized that Kit was so much prettier than she.

"I have it," Kit whispered, "a great plan, just listen. Tomorrow, I'm going to get leave to stay out an hour at noon. Jen won't come with me on account of her shoes. I'll go and buy her the best pair I can find. We wear the same size, and I'll get mine, too, I need some."

"She won't take them," Jack objected.

"Won't she? Just you listen. I'm going to tell her that I got them at a bargain, ninety-eight cents each, and let her pay back the ninety-eight cents."

"I'll pay for them, Kit, and yours, too, but get them good and warm. Can't you find some five-cent stockings, too?" smiling.

"No, she knows too much about the price of them, 'cause you see we're in that stock, but the shoes will be grand."

"See here, Kit," Jack said earnestly. "This treat's Phil's, he insisted on it. I have done a little outside work for him, and he thinks he owes me something. The best pal a fellow ever had is Phil. I have a ten here. Now I want you to take it and fix you and Jen up in shoes. Is that enough?"

"Well, I guess yes, but after the shoes are bought there'll be about five left, for I can buy my own shoes. I'm assistant manager of my department and get better money, and then I have a little that comes to me from pa's estate. I'm going to keep that other five, and buy her some medicine."

"How can you make her take it?"

"Dead easy. I'm going to tell her that I'm hard up and need her help with my rent, and when she hears that, she'll come right over, and that will be tomorrow night. I've got a dandy room and can treat her like a queen. I'll get the medicine, make it look as if I'd had it a long time, and then make her take it to help her cough, so she won't keep me awake."

Jack looked his gratitude and tried to tell it, but Kit shut him up with:

"We'll pull her through all right, so don't worry," and it was all the more to her credit that she helped Jack with his girl, for, although a boy and girl engagement existed between her and a young man in her native town, she liked Jack a little too well for her peace of mind.

However, just then the milk and highball arrived, and Jennie, sipping her hot milk, and listening to the others talking over the remainder of the dinner, forgot her soleless shoes, the racking pains in her chest and under her shoulder blades, and was perfectly happy, gazing at her Jack, her hero.

CHAPTER V.

Jack looked up from his books with an exclamation of surprise.

"Oh, Telfair," he called. "Come here, will you?" and as the office boy sauntered up to his desk he added:

"Who's been monkeying with these books?"

"I dunno," the other answered laconically. "Saw Phil lookin' at 'em this mornin'."

"Phil!" exclaimed Jack, "are you sure?"

"Yeh. I come over with them file reports to put on the 'special' hook, and here he was rubberin' at the 'entry.' I guess he looked at the others, too, but I ain't sure."

"All right, Tommy," Jack said. "There's nothing wrong, so don't say anything. I just wondered, that's all."

But there was something wrong, and Jack knew it. Some one had been making false entries in his books, and what was more, it was being done in a handwriting so much like his own that it took himself to know that it was not. Surely it could not be Phil! Maybe it was all right; he would speak to Phil about it.

Then a strange fear came over him, and he feverishly turned back page after page, where he found item upon item forged into entries. Why, the thing had been going on for months! And if he had not discovered it that morning it might have gone on indefinitely! Surely he would have to see Phil in regard to this.

Shortly after lunch that young gentleman strolled into the office, and, nodding to Jack, sprawled into the large office chair.

"Since when did you get the right to make entries in my books, Phil?" Jack asked abruptly.

Phil started.

"Now don't say you didn't, because you made one this morning. That first finger there that you are holding the cigarette with has a slight stain of blue ink on it, and mine's the only desk that's got that kind."

"You're a regular Sherlock Holmes, Jack," Phil answered laughing a trifle uneasily, with just a suggestion of a sneer in his voice.

"Not at all, Phil, not at all, but I can see what's right under my nose. What I want to know is, why these entries are here and who gave you the authority to make them."

Phil arose and languidly stretched himself.

"Jackie, my boy, don't you worry about those entries," he said easily. "They're all right. Understand? All right."

"I don't know that they are all right," Jack said shortly, annoyed at the other's manner. "Why in Sam Hill did you go to work and imitate my handwriting?"

Again Phil laughed uneasily.

"That's done pretty neatly, isn't it Jack? I pride myself that I'm pretty much the goods when it comes to imitating handwriting. The reason that I did it, though, was to keep the appearance of the books neat. You know what a stickler for neatness the old man is."

"It appeared to me that there might be some other reason for it, Phil," Jack said plainly.

"Look out, John Forbes," cried Phil, his face flushing. "You're intimating something pretty serious."

"I'm intimating nothing, Phil," Jack returned quietly, "but it looks awful bad to me—awful bad."

"What do you mean, Forbes? Do you mean to say that you think I made false entries in your books for the purpose of appropriating money?"

Jack did not falter.

"I'm not in a position to say that exactly. But if you have I'll find out very easily. And—well—a serious matter must be dealt with seriously."

"You find out whatever you damn please! But don't you go to uncle with any cock-and-bull stories before you're able to prove them, or something might fall on you."

Jack laughed.

"And that something might be you, eh? No, no, Phillie boy, you can't scare me worth a cent. I hope," he added earnestly, "that there's nothing wrong in this matter. I certainly hope not. But I don't know—I don't know."

Possibly it was the way the words were said that caused Phil to suddenly step to Jack's side and with his open hand strike him a blow in the face.

"You puppy!" he hissed.

Jack stepped back, his hand held up warningly.

"You're no gentleman," he said simply, but the light of a great anger shone from his eyes. "No, Phil," he continued, "if you want some of that you can have it, but not here. Get your hat and come down into the court."

Phil was trembling with rage, and his hands clasped and unclasped nervously, but Jack's voice was steady and even as he called back to the office boy:

"Back in an hour, Tommy. Come on, Phil."

Jack had selected the little court in the rear of the building as he knew it was light, sheltered so that it could not be seen from windows and so located that few passed there.

Many a man of good red fighting blood has passed up a coarse insult, or even a blow, but a slap in the face is something that none but the arrant coward will stand without redress.

Carelessly Jack threw off his coat and hat, Phil doing likewise, and they faced each other. Had there been a spectator he would have remarked the similarity in height, reach and build of these two handsome youths, fighting as their ancestors fought, fighting as young America loves to fight—with nature's own weapons. It would have seemed, too, to the spectator that there was no brutal slam-and-kick, rough-and-tumble brawl; here was a careful scienced match, with the man best using his head to win. Each husbanded his strength carefully: no bull-like rushes marred the perfect science of the battle. Feint, block, clinch, break, dodge, and invariably a fierce rally where each stood toe-to-toe nor would give ground. Jack's left shoulder was hunched high, his jaw carefully protected, while Phil's easy, limber movements marked him a master of the game of hit and block.

Everything must come to an end, however—even a good fight, and side by side these young warriors washed the marks of battle from their bruised persons with a new feeling of respect each for the other.

"You sure can fight some," Jack said feelingly, between dashes of water.

"I learned of Fred Gilman," Phil returned modestly.

"Well, he sure had a good pupil. It it wasn't for that lucky punch you would have licked me, no doubt."

"I don't think it was a lucky punch, Jack," Phil said, carefully putting a piece of plaster over the split knuckle. "You feinted my guard right, and when you hit me it didn't feel like a lucky one. It sure got the point all right," and he rubbed his jaw ruefully.

Shortly later the two entered the office, and to the head clerk's inquiring glance at their bruised faces Jack said easily:

"Had some trouble with a tough bunch down the street."

Whereupon, little Tommy Telfair kicked his wastebasket viciously, and murmured something about it being just his luck to miss all the good things in life.

(Continued next week.)

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Married in Masque;

OR, OPAL DAYNE'S TERRIBLE MISTAKE

By T. C. HARBAUGH

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CHAPTER XIII.

FOR LOVE'S SWEET SAKE.

It was indeed an old saying that those who attempted to solve the mysteries of the Black Swamp never returned to tell the story of their adventures.

Therefore, it seemed like going into the shadows of death for Opal and the faithful Diana to seek Guy Brinton amid the horrors of that dismal place, but it was a woman's love that goaded the fair daughter of the last of the Daynes to pierce the secrets that lay hidden from the garish light of day.

Opal had set her mind on the search. She had heard ever since childhood, stories of the swamp, and not these could call her back from the venture.

For some rods the two girls made their way into the swamp on horseback, but very soon they were compelled to alight and, tethering their steeds to trees, they continued to advance on foot. The way grew more dismal at every step. The darkness of the place seemed to close round them like a pall and it was enough to try the courage of the bravest man.

Not once did Opal think of turning back. The thick mosses that drooped from the ancient trees sent a chill of horror to her heart, and when she looked at her companion, she found that Diana had welded her lips with determination, but the yellow girl did not quaver.

At last the way grew so dark and infirm that Opal paused.

Their footing was insecure and the oozy waters sent up foul odors that half stifled them.

"Shall we go back?" she asked at last, turning to her friend.

"I go wherever you lead," was the brave reply, and Opal advanced once more.

Suddenly Diana sprang forward and clutched Opal's arm.

"Look ahead!" she said in low tones. "See the light through yonder."

Opal leaned forward and looked. There was the glimmer of a light, but it might be a will-o'-the-wisp and for a moment a smile settled on her face.

"It is the light of a candle," resumed the yellow girl, confidently.

"I see."

"There is some one yonder."

"May we not be near him?"

"Some one is where the light burns."

"Then we shall see."

They heard the dropping serpents whom their presence had disturbed, but this did not unnerve them. Weapons in hand, they went on resolutely, keeping the firmest ground they could find. A misstep would precipitate them into a pool of filth from which there might be no escape.

At last Opal came to a halt and looked once more at Diana. She could not make out her companion's face for the gloom that hemmed them in.

"The light seems to shine through some crevices," she whispered. "There is a shack ahead of us."

At that moment the light vanished, leaving them with nothing but the gloom of the swamp ahead. They felt the nerve-racking ordeal of their trip.

"It may come into view again," said Diana.

"Pray that it may, but we will keep ahead and may come up against the place."

In five minutes more they found themselves on a piece of shaking ground that seemed to sink as they passed it. The whole swamp appeared to be falling away beneath their feet.

All at once the glimmer came back and remained steady. Opal took hope.

"Now! Come. Keep at my heels and hold the revolver in readiness," she said. "It is life or death ahead."

There was no reply, but the white girl knew that she was not alone amid the dangers that hemmed her in.

Suddenly Diana heard the voice of her companion at her ear.

"It is the gleam of a candle. This dark hell is tenanted."

A few steps more and they halted side by side.

Opal pointed ahead.

Diana made out that the light did shine through the cracks of an old hut and looked at Opal for commands.

"We must be in the heart of the old Black," whispered Dayne's daughter. "In a minute we will know the secret it holds."

The light moved. It came toward them, and the next moment they saw it lifted on high as if held by some one, and the wind was flaring it for it was no longer within the hut.

"Look! My God! what a man!"

The words fell from Opal's lips.

Sure enough they had seen a man, if such he may be called. He stood in front of the old shack with the candle above his head, while his wolfish eyes peered around as if he had been startled by some noise.

He was long and gaunt-like, a starved wolf. In one hand he held a rifle, while the other took care of the light. His garments clung to his frame in patches, and he looked for all the world like some one from the nether world.

"Mr. Guy is not here," ejaculated Diana. "Wait. We shall know in a moment."

The yellow girl heard the click of Opal's weapon and saw her spring forward.

The man in front of the hut started like a hunted felon.

"No you don't!" cried Opal as she saw him raise the rifle. "Down with the gun."

He complied with a grated oath and stared at the girl who confronted him with the cocked revolver in his face.

Diana had come up, and her weapon supplemented Opal's action.

"Who are you?" demanded Miss Dayne.

The man growled like a wild beast, but did not reply.

"Whom have you in the hut? Answer, sir, or you may rot in the heart of the Black Swamp."

"Hang me if it isn't the old Colonel's girl."

"You are right. I am the daughter of Colonel Dayne. And you are——"

"I am Nobb Carew."

Opal paused a moment.

"Well, Mr. Carew," said she, "you haven't selected a very nice place for your habitation. You have some one in the hut?"

"What is that to you?"

"More than you think."

Opal advanced, but the man waved her back.

"Don't stop us, please," said the girl. "You don't think that we have braved the dangers of the old Black to be stopped now? Into the hut with your candle!"

Mr. Nobb Carew turned with a curse and obeyed. Opal followed and saw the light pierce the corners of the shack.

Suddenly she uttered a cry.

"I thought so,' she cried. "So you are the jailer, Nobb Carew?"

Something human had stirred on a lot of straw and it was this object that had brought the exclamation from Opal's lips.

"Watch that man," she said to Diana. "At the first movement send a bullet through his head. Don't mince matters, girl."

In another moment she was bending over the man on the straw and was looking into the startled face of Guy Brinton.

"You?" cried the young man. "You, Opal?"

"Yes."

He half averted his face.

"They have lied, then? It is not true?"

"So you have heard?"

"That man told me, but I would not believe. He said——"

A little smile came to the corners of Opal's mouth.

"That I am the wife of Mark Calvert?"

"That is what he said, but it is false."

"He spoke the truth."

Guy Brinton's look became a stare, and there was the germ of hatred in it, hatred for the girl he loved.

"The story of that accursed bridal after awhile," continued Opal. "We have other things to talk about now. You must quit this place."

"With the wife of Mark Calvert? Why not let me perish here?"

"No!" and the hand of Opal fell upon Guy Brinton's arm. "I have come and you must go. There is a higher law in this country than the law of man."

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW CARRINGFORD GOT HIS MAN.

Meanwhile, Polk Carringford, armed with the commands of Colonel Dayne, was looking for Mark Calvert.

He had been commissioned by the man whom he followed through the Civil War to bring to him the man who married his daughter by a trick, and no better man than Carringford could have been entrusted with such a commission.

He was to bring Calvert alive to Riverside and he took a solemn oath that he would carry out his commission. He knew the sort of man he hunted, he knew the desperateness and coolness of Mark Calvert, for he had seen these qualities tested on more than one occasion, yet he did not shirk the duty nor lose time.

He went first to Mark's home, but there the man was not and Carringford turned his head in the direction of West Port. He knew the favorite haunts of Calvert, and as he galloped down the fair road he laid his plans for the capture of Opal's husband.

No time was to be lost, for Colonel Dayne at any time might take a turn for the worse and thus be deprived of taking vengeance on the man who had tricked his daughter. Carringford could, or thought he could, guess what the vengeance would be. Dayne was a man of iron nerve. His signal gallantry at Gettysburg had given him a name throughout the South, and he had fought the feudists with his old-time bravery only, as we have seen, to be ambushed and left for dead in the Ghost's Hollow.

Carringford entered West Port as the sun gilded the hills that lay back of the river. The town seemed deserted, but here and there a negro was already on the shady side of the street, and a mangy dog howled in front of the postoffice.

Colonel Dayne's man rode to the only tavern and leaped from his horse.

Throwing the lines over the post he mounted the steps and entered the building.

The landlord came forward at sight of him and smiled a good-morning, which did not divert Carringford's attention from the main object of duty.

"What's the news up the river?" asked the sallow boniface. "An' how's Kurnel Dayne? Heard he was pinked, you know——"

"Colonel Dayne is getting along," snapped Carringford. "Just now I'm looking for a man."

"What sort o' man might he be?"

Just then voices came to Carringford's ears from an adjoining room and he turned quickly in that direction.

"Never mind," said he with a glance at the landlord, "I'll see for myself."

He laid his hand on the latch and opened the door. For a moment he could not make out the interior of the room for the vile smoke that rushed at him, but the fresh air brushed it aside and he saw a room full of eager gamblers.

Nearly all had looked up as the door squeaked in opening and only a few gave Carringford any sort of greeting. The rest remained at the game.

Polk Carringford stepped into the room and, after a swift glance at the crowd, went over to one of the tables and paused at the side of a young man whose hands were filled with cards.

Mark Calvert looked up.

"Ho! what brought you down so early, Polk?" he asked as he caught Carringford's eye, but did not catch its meaning.

"Oh," said the other easily, I thought I would ride to the Port and look around."

"Want a hand in the game, eh?"

"Not just now, thanks. How long do you expect to play, Mark?"

"Till I'm pauper or winner."

"Are you nearly broke now?"

"Heavens, no! Ask the others how they are."

Carringford stole a glance over the table and noted the little heaps of coin that were to be seen. It was evident that fortune just then was with Calvert.

"I can't wait," said he, addressing the man he had come for. "I am in a little hurry. Can I have your time for a while?"

"Mine?"

"Yes."

"Can't you wait?"

"No."

"You must be in a devilish hurry," snarled Calvert. "I don't know that I have any time to spare now."

"Neither have I," answered Carringford, feeling for the weapon under his coat. "You will give me some of your time now, Mark. It's important business that brought me to the Port."

Was it the cold steel in Carringford's eyes that told Mark Calvert that the man from above had uttered a terrible truth? He shifted uneasily in his chair, laid down his "hand" and got up.

"What is it?" he queried.

"Outside," answered Carringford, coolly. "Our business is not for every ear."

They crossed the room, Polk opening the door, and not for an instant losing sight of his prey. To flinch now would be to find himself at the mercy of Mark Calvert, a shot and a man of deadly cleverness.

They left the house and walked out upon the porch.

"Where's your horse?" asked Carringford.

"In the stable."

"Call for him."

Calvert started and turned upon Polk with a strange look in his eyes.

"What does all this mean?" he cried. "By Jupiter! you are doing some cool thing. Don't you know you have no right to command me, Polk Carringford?"

"Never mind. Shall I call for your horse?"

Calvert's hand moved toward his pocket, but the fingers of Carringford gripped his wrist.

"No you don't," he said as he looked him squarely in the eyes. "I haven't come to West Port to be balked, Mr. Calvert. You will call for your horse."

"And you will explain by and by?"

"Yes."

Calvert turned and ordered his horse brought forward, and as the handsome animal appeared he turned once more to the cool Carringford.

"What's next on the program?" he asked with a little smile.

"I'll tell you in the saddle."

The mystified man mounted, and at the same time Carringford bestrode his own steed.

"Not a pace till I know what this all means," hissed Mark Calvert, turning to his captor a white face and a pair of eyes that seemed to emit flashes of fire. "You've gone far enough with this mummery."

"Good! You shall be enlightened, sir," was the response. "I have come to escort you to Riverside."

Calvert's hand dropped from the bridle and he glared at his companion.

"To—Riverside?" he echoed.

"Yes, sir, to the home of your bride, if that sounds better," said Polk Carringford.

"Who sent for me—my wife?"

"No, her father."

"Then I'll be hanged if I go."

The words seemed to come through clinched teeth.

"You may be worse than hanged if you don't," replied Carringford. "Colonel Dayne wants to see you."

"Why doesn't he come to me?"

"You know why he does not. You know that he hovers now between life and death. The whole country has been full of the shooting in Ghost Hollow. You need not see your wife. As I understand it the interview is to be between yourself and Colonel Dayne. He knows all about the wedding——"

"And that's why he's sent after me?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"What are your orders?"

"To take you to Riverside."

"Dead or alive?"

"Alive."

The grim smile grew broader at Calvert's lips.

"And what would you do if I were to refuse to go with you?"

"Can't you guess? For the first time in my life I would disobey my old Colonel's command."

"And take me dead?"

"Yes."

Eye met eye and face almost touched face. Carringford felt the breath of his man on his cheek. What would Mark Calvert do?

"All right," said Opal's husband. "I will go with you, Polk, but you'll have to watch me."

CHAPTER XV.

TORTURED HEARTS.

It was gall to Guy Brinton to hear from the lips of the woman he had loved and lost that she was the bride of his bitterest enemy. He could not conceive how Mark Calvert had won Opal even by a trick, and his mind was tortured in a thousand ways while he made his way through the Black Swamp guided by the two girls. He was silent.

His guard had been left behind with the injunction not to follow, and he was satisfied that he would see nothing more of Nobb Carew.

Opal, too, said nothing during the journey from the old shack. She cast furtive glances at the man she had rescued, making out his figure among the many shadows of the disgusting place and wondering what his thoughts were.

It was not till they had left the dismal spot behind that a word was spoken.

"I cannot believe this terrible story," said Guy, halting where he could look into the beautiful, but sad face of his deliverer. "It is too horrible for me to think about."

"It is true," replied Opal. "The whole country knows it. I am the wife of Mark Calvert."

"Tell me all. Let me know it now," and Guy turned upon her and looked her squarely in the eyes. "This is the last thing I would have thought of. It almost drives me mad."

"You shall hear all—all of this man's villainy. I will keep nothing back and I will not even ask you to forgive me."

The voice of the fair girl trembled a little. Diana drew off a pace and turned away.

Opal proceeded and gave the whole history of the trick marriage, while Guy listened like one in a trance. The truth broke in upon his by degrees and he felt deep in his heart a hatred it had never held before.

Opal paused at last, the last word said and her face as white as her shroud would be some day.

"I will find this man!" cried Guy. 'I will make him pay for this unheard of villainy."

"You mean that you will have his life?"

"It belongs to me."

"You must remember that he is my husband."

"And you must not forget that, but for him we should now be happy."

"I forget nothing, Guy. It was my fault after all. I proposed the marriage in masque and, but for my foolish whim this crime would not have taken place."

"I forgive you, Opal, but this villain, never!"

"There is another vengeance that is not within the pale of the law. You forget this. My father lies at death's door, shot by some unknown assassin——"

"His hand is in that, too," exclaimed Guy. "I see in the crime of Ghost Hollow the hand of Mark Calvert."

"There is, as yet, no proof of this."

"No positive proof, I know."

"Father did not get a glimpse of the scoundrel. The dogs have failed to track him down."

"And who knows better how to deceive the hounds than Mark Calvert?"

Opal thought of her initiation into the clan of the Crimson Caps and the last words of the Grand Master still rang in her ears. She was under the domination of the dread order and would have to obey at the peril of her life any command it might promulgate.

Opal called Diana, and the yellow girl came forward.

"We will move on," said she. "Mr. Brinton must be anxious to get home after his terrible experience. You say you cannot tell who caught you in the road and carried you to the depths of the Black Swamp?"

"I do not know. I was pounced upon unawares and knocked from my horse. When I recovered consciousness I was in that hated cabin in the heart of the old Black with Nobb Carew as my jailer. He gave me no clew to my assailants. But I need none," he proceeded. "I can lay my hands on the man who played this trick. I can find him without trouble, and he shall pay for that night's crimes."

Again the soft hand of Opal fell like a snowflake upon his arm.

"Do not forget that he is my husband.'

"Do you want to drive the arrow deeper into my soul?" exclaimed Guy. "Do you take delight in telling me that you are his and not mine?"

"No. Not for a moment. It is torture unspeakable for me to admit that I am that man's wife."

"Would to Heaven that I had never seen the light of this day," cried Brinton as he averted his face, and for a little while they stood silent in each other's presence.

"Will your father live?" he suddenly asked.

"Doctor Semple says there is hope.'

"Would it not be best if he should die without knowing the truth?"

"He knows it all."

"And he has cursed you?"

"No, he has forgiven."

"Man is a strange creature," said Guy. "Colonel Dayne is one who hates well.'

"He has been schooled in hatred, has my father," replied Opal. "The feud which has reigned so long has overturned his better nature, but for all this he has forgiven his daughter."

"We part here, Mrs. Calvert," said Guy coldly as he turned into a road which branched from the one they were traveling.

Opal's face went whiter than ever.

"Don't call me by that name," she almost wailed.

"Do you not bear that title?"

"Yes, yes, but the ignominy of it!"

"The law gave it to you, and not even death can take it away."

Opal Dayne held her face in her white hands, and for a minute remained in that attitude.

Brinton watched her and remained silent. How he loved this woman no tongue could tell. His whole soul was buried in her, and as he looked at her he bit his white lips almost through, and trembled like a leaf. He would avenge her. Aye, he would hunt up Mark Calvert and make him atone for the most dastardly trick ever played upon a fond and trusting woman.

Not even Opal should drive him from the trail. Her pleadings should not turn him from his design. He would become the most bitter avenger the world had ever seen, and the land should remember for years to come the vengeance of Guy Brinton.

All at once Opal held out her hand, but as suddenly she drew it back. It was the hand she had given to Mark Calvert at the altar.

Guy seemed to divine the thought that prompted her act, and looked at her once more.

"Till we meet again," said he, falling back. "I will go home, but I will not be your enemy."

"A thousand thanks for those words," cried Opal. "Not my enemy! They are balm to my wounded heart."

"You have not seen him since the night of the wedding?" asked Guy.

"I have not."

"Then he has not come to claim you?"

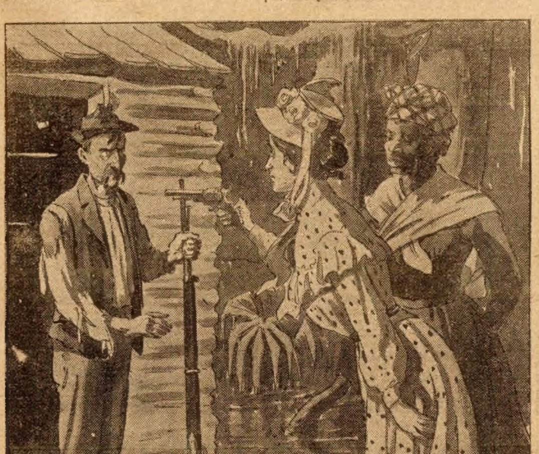
"He has held aloof from me."

"Then he may never claim his bride."

There was a deep and terrible meaning in the words that fell from Brinton's lips. Opal understood.

"I say you must not!" she cried in tones of command. "If you ever loved me you must keep hands off—my husband."

"You love him after all?"



"Down with the gun!"

"Do you think so? Think you that I have forgotten our vows? I do not love the man whose wife I am in the eyes of the law. But for all that I am his wife, and you must not lift a hand against him. There is another source of vengeance."

"After years of torture as his wife?"

"We cannot look into the future," said Opal. "We have to deal only with the present. Remember, no matter how much it tortures you, that I am no longer Opal Dayne."

"Just as if I would forget it. It will invade my dreams and stab me in my sleep, if I can sleep."

She did not reply, and without a farewell of hands they parted, Guy going down the road which led to his plantation, and Opal and Diana taking the way to Riverside.

No words fell between the two women during the ride home. Opal entered the house and threw herself upon her bed. Suddenly the hand of the faithful Diana roused her.

"To the window!" cried the yellow girl. "For the love of God, to the window, Miss Opal."

Colonel Dayne's daughter sprang up and ran across the room. She gave one look and staggered back white faced. Polk Carringford had accomplished his mission. He was leading Mark Calvert across the lawn.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FLIGHT OF A SOUL.

Mark Calvert had come to Riverside, but not of his own free will, as we have seen.

He had discovered that in Polk Carringford he had an antagonist who was as cool as himself, and who would carry out his master's commands to the letter. He had but to look into the eyes of the old Confederate soldier to discover that he had best obey his word, and thus keep his own life from peril.

When he told Polk that he would have to watch him, he had in his mind a desperate plan, but the steely blue eyes of the man who had caught him, admonished him that an attempt to carry it out meant death. And death was the last thing he wanted to meet.

Therefore, he swallowed his intentions and rode quietly by his captor's side, allowing him to conduct him to Riverside, though he dreaded an interview with Colonel Dayne.

He hoped he would not meet the woman he had basely wronged. He had no desire to stand face to face with his wife, not that he was afraid of the woman, despite the warning brought him by Miss Barton, but he did not care to meet her under her father's roof.

Carringford opened the door and ushered him into the house.

"This way," said Polk, as Mark halted in the hallway. "You need no introduction to Colonel Dayne."

Polk opened a door near by and Mark stepped forward. The room beyond was not well lighted, but he made out the well-known figure of the master of Riverside in a large chair.

"I am back," said Carringford, who had followed at Mark's heels.

The man in the chair started and looked at the persons before him.

A strange, but eager light flashed up in his eyes as his gaze fell upon his son-in-law.

"Ah, I see," he exclaimed. "You have not failed in your mission, Polk."

"I never fail," replied Carringford proudly.

"It is well," and the voice of Dayne assumed a sternness that was full of satisfaction.

"You can go, Polk. Leave this man with me."

Carringford cast another look at his master and fell back.

"Leave the room, please, Polk. I want to be alone with Mr. Calvert."

Polk Carringford, loth to go, opened the door and retired. What would pass between these two men? What would happen within the walls of that little room?

For a moment the deep eyes of Colonel Dayne studied the man before him, and then his thin hand waved him to a vacant chair. Dayne seemed to have aged ten years since the crime in Ghost Hollow. He looked like a man on the fringe of the unseen world, and it must have seemed to Mark Calvert that he was gazing at one upon whom the grim monster had set his dreaded seal.

For a full minute neither one spoke.

"So you have come?" said Dayne at last, his voice dropped almost to a whisper.

"Yes, and I confess not of my own free will."

"We will not argue that point," resumed Dayne. "I sent Polk after you knowing what the result would be. He never fails."

Calvert glanced hurriedly around the room. They were alone. He sought to see if Colonel Dayne had a weapon at his command, but he could see none. He was armed himself, and therefore, the master of this death-stricken man, but he would not have to use his weapon. His hands would be enough to hold the mastery.

"You are my daughter's husband," said Dayne when he spoke again. "You are connected with the house of Dayne."

Mark nodded, but did not speak.

"It was the trick of a coward," and the words seemed to cut like a two-edged sword. "It was the revenge of a dastard, but we will let that pass."

A smile came to Mark's lips. Again he gloried in the triumph he had won. He had at least taken the most terrible revenge he could have taken against Colonel Dayne. The disgrace of the midnight wedding had sunk deeper into the man's soul than the bullet of the would-be assassin.

"I have sent for you to acknowledge you as my daughter's husband," continued Colonel Dayne. "I told Polk to bring you to me, but did not tell him for what. Had I told him, I believe he would have shot you on sight."

"He might have met his match at that game," said Calvert.

"Now, sir," and again the voice of Dayne fell to the borders of a whisper. "You must promise me one thing."

He paused and looked Mark fairly in the face.

"You shall not be asked to denounce this marriage. You shall swear to quit this neighborhood and never return."

"Sir?"

Calvert drew back, first with a little laugh forming on his tongue, then with his eyes aflame.

"You would drive me from the country. That is what you mean?"

"You must go!" said Colonel Dayne. "You shall put leagues between my child and yourself. You shall not come back while she lives."

"You forget to whom you talk," cried Calvert. "I am the son of Mowbray Calvert——"

"I care not whose son you are," broke in the master of Riverside. "You must go."

"What if I refuse?"

Colonel Dayne shut his eyes a moment and his whole frame quivered like an aspen bough.

"I will tell you why you must go. It is for your own life, Mark Calvert. Two years ago you were absent six months from your plantation."

"That is true."

"During that time you went to many places."

"Like any young man sowing his oats."

"And the harvest you sowed, you are liable to reap at any moment."

"Pardon me, if I do not quite understand you."

A sparkle came into the deep eyes of Colonel Dayne. He leaned toward the man before him and studied his face for half a minute.

"Would you know?" he said. "The secret of that absence is in my hands. I know all."

"You know nothing," said Mark. "This is a guess of yours, a mere guess, nothing more."

"Think you so?" and the hand of Dayne moved underneath the covering on his lap and remained there a little while.

When he drew it out it clutched a paper, at sight of which Calvert started.

"Now, sir, do you think I guess?" he demanded, thrusting the paper almost into Mark's face.

"What of it?" defiantly cried Calvert. "The woman is dead. She can never be a witness against me."

"Dead?" and the lips of Dayne laughed derisively. "Dead, say you, Mark Calvert? The trick long ago makes the one you played upon my child the more heinous. It is the more damnable because you were already a married man."

"It is false! The other woman is dead. You know it, and the paper you hold in your hand is powerless."

"Powerless? Why, then, this letter?" and the speaker took from within the paper a letter which his white hand grasped with eager victory.

"This letter, dated within the last ten days, is from her," he exclaimed. "I can summon her to Riverside within five hours. A telegram will bring upon the scene of your recent crime, the person of your child-wife, Gloria."

Mark Calvert, as white-faced as Colonel Dayne, was on his feet.

"You must go, I care not where, but you must go," said the man in the chair. "I spare your life only on this condition. If you remain in the county at the end of this day you will pay with your life the penalty of your deeds. And it will not be my feeble hand that will strike."

Calvert took a mad, impulsive step forward.

"Give me your accursed proof," he almost roared.

"Not while I live!" was the reply as Dayne drew back.

The rage of a fiend incarnate took possession of Mark Calvert's soul. He threw himself forward and clutched at the throat of the Man of Gettysburg. He bore him back with the strength of a demon, while he tore at the documents in his hand. It was a brief struggle, a curse and a jerk and the papers were his.

Calvert thrust them into an inner pocket, gave one glance at the old man who lay limp in the arm-chair, opened the door, sprang from the room and threw himself upon his horse.

The mettled sorrel seemed to fly down the road, his rider urging him on and on, and half an hour after his precipitate flight Opal stole into her father's room and found him dead in his chair.

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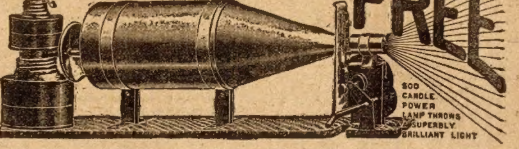

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Her Fateful Marriage

By ANNIE BROWNLEE

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE LAWS OF GOD.

"I tell you what it is, Grace, you and I have got to come to some understanding. we cannot go on like this forever. I am going to make you a proposition, and if you have the sense I give you credit for, you will see it is the only thing for you and me." He pauses and looks at her waveringly, as though hesitating to speak further.

"Go on, I am listening," she says steadily.

"Well, then, I want you to apply for a divorce. I'll admit you have sufficient grounds, and I will allow you a princely annuity. In fact, I'll agree to almost anything you propose, only I must and will have freedom. I presume from what you have just said, you will feel somewhat the same?"

"I was not entirely unprepared for such a request. In fact, after what I have learned today I have been half expecting it. You say you must and will have freedom. Of course, if you are determined to break the laws of God and man, I suppose I am powerless to prevent you; but I shall not lift a finger to give you your freedom," she said emphatically. "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

There is a moment of absolute silence. Then Sir Richard confronts her with a face of sullen rage.

"What the devil do you mean?" he asks hoarsely. "Would you have us drag out our lives like this? My God, woman, you will drive me mad! You say you love Mark Eldon, but you lie. If you loved him you would not hesitate one instant to avail yourself of the freedom I offer you."

"You have my answer," she replied unwaveringly. "I don't believe in marrying one day and seeking freedom the next. To me marriage is a solemn, eternal thing, and death alone can sever the bonds which unite us."

"Have a care, Grace! Men have been driven to desperate measures before!" he said, darkly, threateningly.

"I shall not change my mind," she replied. "Threats or entreaties will be of no avail. I will abide by my folly, you must do the same."

For several minutes he walked the floor in angry silence.

"If you won't be reasonable, then I shall have to banish you from society, and see what effect that will have. You will go to the Grange at once, and remain there till you have reached a reasonable frame of mind. Others of high social standing have found the divorce court useful in freeing them from unfortunate marriages. Why not we?" he asked angrily.

"My banishment to the Grange will be a pleasant one," she replied with a wan smile. "There the greatest happiness of my life came to me, and there it was taken away. The place is full of tender associations, and I love it dearly."

For a moment conscience smote him, he knew she was thinking of her dead child. Then the old, fierce anger returned.

"You are mad enough then, to prefer that dismal old place to a life of freedom and pleasure? But you were always peculiar."

The white, sad face twitches, but she is otherwise calm.

"Freedom, as you mean it, I never expect to have. I will repeat, for the last time, that I will seek no divorce. If you are so anxious for a legal separation you must apply for it yourself."

"Had I the shadow of a chance of obtaining it, I should not hesitate. But I have not, and you know it. Not that you are more virtuous than other women whom you condemn, but you are more clever at concealing it."

An angry flush mounts to her brow and for several seconds there is silence. Then she says thoughtfully:

"I have no doubt you would. We live in an age when marriage is easy, and divorce is cheap, but think of the eternity that must follow. Pause a moment, Richard, and think. We erred grievously when we stood before the altar of God and plighted our lives to each other. Our vows that day were recorded in the book of Heaven and all man's laws are powerless to efface them. I cannot, I dare not, do as you ask."

He had been watching her intently while speaking, and her appeal, her calmness and her steadfast faith, only served to add fuel to his wrath against her.

"You, a faithless wife, would presume to set your views against the laws of the world, against the judgment of our Government! You are mad, woman! Hopelessly mad!" he sneered.

His cruel words stung her sensitive heart, and for a moment her lips quiver piteously.

"Mad I may be, but I will stick to my madness. I will consent to separation—for I believe that to be necessary after what has occurred—but not divorce. Did I do as you wish I would think myself as guilty as you," she said, with a certain angry dignity that enhanced her youth, her beauty, tenfold.

"I would infer, then, that you consider divorce a dreadful crime?" he asked hoarsely.

"Divorce is an evil, but I will admit it is sometimes a necessary evil. The judge that will grant a man or a woman a divorce, with the privilege of marrying again, is committing a grievous wrong, and is responsible for much sin and misery. There is no just cause why you should seek this divorce, other than your desire to make the Countess of Ruttlen your wife."

"I admit it," he says with brutal candor. "Life with you has become intolerable."

"You are determined to obtain a divorce, then?"

"Yes, quite determined," was the quick response.

"Yet, you were once equally determined that I should be your wife. In four short years you have wearied of the toy you once prized so highly; have learned to look lightly upon the love you once vowed would be eternal. So much for man's love you have taught me. But, remember, the woman who has fascinated you so madly will weary of you, even sooner than you have wearied of me. I shall leave Paris this evening. I think we have said all that is necessary," coldly turning her back upon him.

"Very well, madam, but remember if you persist in your obstinate course, I may be forced to manufacture the evidence I require. It has been done before, you know, and may be done again. I shall order the carriage to take you to the depot. So be ready."

And without one farewell word, one kindly look, he left her, and sought the discomfited and angry Countess.

When Sir Richard leaves her, Grace stands as though numbed with grief and despair.

For the first time she realizes her own helplessness. How utterly powerless she is to battle against the foes that threaten her.

God pity the woman who comes to a realization of her own helplessness, when the man who has sworn to protect and honor her, instead insults and tramples on the weakness which he had sworn to protect.

She knows that her husband is desperate and faithless, and capable of carrying out his last cruel threat.

The more she thinks of it, the more desperate the case appears to her, yet she can see no way of escape. Her husband and the Countess will be sure to devise some plan by which her name will be dragged through the mire of scandal. What use is innocence to a woman whose name has been dragged through the courts? A thousand tongues will wag, a thousand rumors fly, which will be magnified and added to until it assumes huge proportions.

"After all I am rightly punished," she thinks, with a sob, as she drops wearily into a chair and covers her face with her hands. "I should have been true to Mark, or, being faithless, I should not have allowed him to see me so much. Now, whichever way I look at it, there seems only shame and misery and dishonor."

While Grace sits there numbed with despair, a gentle knock sounds on the door, and a familiar voice asks:

"May I come in?" and Cousin Charley's wife enters. "You will pardon me, dear, but I could not remain away. I was in the parlor when that creature came in. I had been napping on a couch in a secluded corner, when they entered. The sound of their voices woke me, and for very shame's sake, I remained concealed. You will forgive me, dear, won't you?" she asked gently.

"There is nothing to forgive. Mrs. Duncan. And I am rather glad that you heard what passed, you will the better understand my position."

"I do understand, dear child, and you have my heart's sympathy. It is all owing to that hateful woman. Oh, my dear, that precious mother of yours will have much to answer for! Why could she not have let you marry Mark Eldon? A title, and social position don't always bring happiness, as many of my American sisters have learned to their cost."

"You know of Mark, then?" Grace asks, her face crimsoning painfully.

"Know? of course I do! I have eyes and ears, and I know how to use them. All London knows of your mother's worldliness and your ruined life."

"My God!" Grace cries in acutest misery. "Have I concealed my shame so poorly?"

"Your misfortune and sorrow you mean," Mrs. Duncan says gently.

Then Grace relates what has passed between her husband and herself.

"But that is absurd!" Mrs. Duncan cries indignantly. "He has not the shadow of a proof to bring against you. Don't heed it, dear; it is only a threat."

"But evidence can be bought," Grace replies.

"Nonsense! I don't believe Sir Richard would drag your name and his through the courts without a particle of proof to support his claims. Were he to carry out his threat, no judge would listen to such a case. I am glad, after all, that I heard what passed today. If the worst should occur, my testimony would be valuable to you."

For a moment they are both silent and thoughtful, and in that moment they rea-

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lize that, be a woman ever innocent, the breath of a public inquiry will tarnish her good name forever. Grace lays her head on her friend's shoulder and bursts into sobs.

"Oh, my poor Mark!" she wails. "It was an evil fate that parted us, and then threw us together again. Oh, Mrs. Duncan, tell me what I should do? I cannot bear to think of Mark being dragged into this disgraceful affair. I have caused him so much unhappiness in the past, I would spare him this, if possible. For myself it don't matter so much. I have been unhappy so long, that anything else would seem strange and unnatural."

"My dear!" exclaims Mrs. Duncan, "You should know that a man never suffers in these cases; it is always the woman. The more innocent she is, the more society will shun her. It looks respectable, you know, to raise a great hue and cry against the person who has been so indiscreet as to allow their wrong-doings to be found out. It is always those that have the least virtue that make the loudest outcry. A woman like you, who has been guilty of no actual wrong, but only very imprudent, very sorely tried, and yet has dared to be virtuous, to stand firm against temptation, will receive no mercy."

"I know that," Grace answers indifferently.

"If Mark had only been more thoughtful and less selfish, you might have been spared much."

"Don't blame him, Mrs. Duncan. He has been tempted sorely; and many men would have acted much worse. I alone am to blame. I should not have allowed myself to be persuaded into a marriage that could have but one ending. For my folly I deserve to suffer, only sometimes," she says wearily, "it does seem as though the pain was beyond my power of endurance."

The tears sprang to the American woman's eyes.

"You poor, dear!" she murmurs softly, "Your atonement, is far greater than your sin. What course will you pursue?"

"I hardly know yet. But of this I am assured, if he gains the freedom he craves, it will be through no assistance of mine. I will go direct to the Grange, and there wait for time to determine what the end will be. Through all my sorrow I have respected my husband's name, he, at least, might respect mine."

"I think you are acting wisely," her friend replied, "but I fear you will have much to endure yet. You have humiliated the Countess, and she is sure to seek revenge."

"Life is full of suffering," the injured wife replied. "Were I to grant his selfish request, my life would be none the less unhappy. I may as well endure for the right as for the wrong."

"But whatever the end may be, be sure of this," her friend says gently, "my house is always open to you. Though the world should turn against you, dear, my friendship and sympathy will never fail."

Grace looks her gratitude at the strong, honest face of the American woman—the woman whom the Countess of Ruttlen considered so vulgar, and had tried so hard to avoid.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"AS YE SOW, SO SHALL YE REAP."

Sir Richard goes straight to the Countess after leaving Grace.

She is pacing the floor like a wounded tigress, a thousand wild schemes and projects flash through her mind; all the fierceness of her nature is aroused into a furious longing to avenge this insult, as she terms it, upon the woman who has dealt it to her.

She trembles with mingled rage and shame. If Grace had stood before her now, she could have crushed out her life with rejoicing.

At this moment Sir Richard enters, and his face is dark and vengeful.

She stops in her angry pacing to and fro, and looks at him.

"Well," she says angrily, "what has she to say? You don't look very elated."

"No, I suppose not. Confound it! She is as headstrong and stubborn as a mule," he said, throwing himself into a chair. "But she must, she will, yield!" he cried angrily.

"She refused your proposition, then?" the Countess asked in an agitated voice.

"Yes, utterly; and neither threats or persuasions had any effect upon her. But I will compel her to yield yet."

"Allow me to predict that you will do nothing of the sort. Weak as she may seem, she has the strength to stick to her convictions," she replied tartly.

"Time will tell, and money will do almost anything," he said with a frown. "I have set my heart on this thing, and I will see it through."

"Dick, you're a fool!" the Countess cried angrily. "You haven't the shadow of a chance of success. Do you think for a moment that I would marry you, were you to drag my name into the divorce court, as would certainly be the case were you to try and fight it out? If you cannot obtain a divorce on the terms we spoke of, then it is good-by forever with you and me. I will not be the butt and ridicule of society."

"Good-by! What do you mean?" he asked, only half comprehending. "Do you think I am going to give you up so easily? By heavens, no!"

"You will have no choice in the matter. I am tired of waiting for what may never occur. I have been insulted, and slighted as long as I am going to be. I will try and be respectable in the future. Count Hasselgrave has asked me to be his wife. I shall accept him this very day."

"The Hungarian!" Sir Richard asked stupidly. "God, woman, would you drive me mad? You know I cannot give you up. Send the Count away, and I swear it will all come right."

"I will do nothing of the kind. I have my future to think of; and the possibility of your ever being free grows more remote each day."

"Don't drive me desperate! You know what you are to me!" he pleads. "She knows that I know of her love for Mark. If she does not yield, I will bring proceedings against her on that score."

"Mark! Pshaw! You have no case there. They were too wise for us. Of course, every one knows they were lovers, but you can't bring one tangible proof against them. No, there is nothing for us to do but make the best of it. You bought your toy, and now you must keep it. And I must ask you to go, your presence here will give rise to further scandal. Henceforth, I must be careful of appearances."

"For God's sake stop, Kitty! You know how dearly I love you.. Give me some word of hope, and I promise you I will work miracles, or die in the attempt. You won't promise to marry the Count—not today, at least?" he asked entreatingly.

"I have no doubt there was a time when you thought you could not live without the woman you are now striving to be separated from," the Countess replied mockingly. "So much for man's love and constancy, you see. However, I will promise not to accept the Count today if that is any comfort to you. But you must not follow me so constantly. It looks bad, you know. Now, will you go, or will I have to turn you out?" she asked impatiently.

"Oh, I will go at once. And Kitty, you will never regret having rejected the Count. I will——"

"You are mistaken," she flashed. "I didn't say I would reject him; only that I would not accept him today. Now, go before I lose patience and quarrel with you," and opening the door, she resolutely pushed him out and closed the door. Then she turned the key in the lock and went and stood by the window.

The window was thrown up, and presently she leaned out. The grounds are full of well dressed people, and before the door a carriage stands waiting. She can see Sir Richard standing near the steps of the piazza. A moment later, and the loud indignant tones of Mrs. Duncan fall with dismay upon her ears.

"I tell you, Sir Richard, you are a disgrace to the English nobility! If you were across the pond in our country, you would have a very good chance of explaining what it feels like to have a rope around your neck, with the other end thrown over the limb of a tree! Men have been lynched in America for less heinous crimes than the one you are contemplating."

"Why, my dear Mrs. Duncan—you—you are surely mistaken! You—you have been misinformed!" he said nervously, his face paling to the hue of chalk.

"Don't trouble yourself to invent excuses. Faithless you are, but you might at least be truthful. I was in the parlor when you and the Countess entered. If I was a man, I would have horsewhipped you publicly, but being denied that pleasure, I can at least let you know what I think of your conduct. You are a base, contemptible cur, Sir Richard, and you known it, and the world knows it, and the Countess knows it; and mark my words, she will tire of you yet, and throw you over."

With a muttered curse, Sir Richard threw his cigar away. To add to his rage and discomfort, he could see that a number of loungers were eagerly grasping every word.

"Why, woman, you are mad!" he cried hoarsely. "Don't you know I could have you arrested for speaking to me like that?"

"I only wish you would. I'd give a mighty lot to be able to speak out my mind in public. I imagine by the time I was through with you, you would feel about the smallest man in the kingdom."

A sound of smothered laughter greets Sir Richard's ears, and with an oath, not loud, but deep, he walks away, and takes up his position near the waiting carriage. A moment later, Grace, dressed for traveling, comes out. The American woman bids her an affectionate farewell, then stands on the piazza and watches her depart.

Sir Richard helped Grace into the carriage, then offered her his hand, but she shook her head.

"When you retract the cruel words you said this morning, I will then shake hands with you, not before."

"Oh, very well," he answered, coolly enough, though he was inwardly boiling. "Think over my proposition, and remember, I meant every word I said."

She did not deign him a reply, but with a tense, drawn look, ordered the carriage to proceed.

The Countess had heard all that passed, and turned from the window in a fury of indignation and rage.

"My God;" she cried, "I am ruined, and all through that fool of a Dick! To think, that my name should be spoken of so lightly, so sneeringly! Oh, how I would like to crush that horrid woman!" she almost screamed in her terrible passion.

She was angry with herself for having allowed the world to see through her baseness, angry with the American for having dared to speak of it, and most of all, angry with Sir Richard for having failed to bring Grace to a proper state of wifely submission.

For several hours she walked the floor with brows contracted and hands clenched. She was thinking hard, and trying to determine on the future. At last the frown on her brow cleared, her hands hung limp by her side.

"I'll do it," she muttered to herself. "Perhaps after all things have turned out for the best. It is a wearisome task, waiting for another to drop out, that you may take their place. And, then, a man that won't be true to the first wife, can hardly be expected to be true to the second. And much as I hate and despise Grace, I'll admit he has treated her shamefully. But he is so persistent, so wilful. I fear I may have trouble in getting rid of him; but I have made up my mind, and I will do it somehow."

This interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very startling episodes and situations. Its perusal to the end will highly reward you. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly advised to send in the price of subscription at once. If you do so, we will be glad to send you free one of our splendid King Cameras or any six patterns you may select from our pattern page, or one of our fine woolen shawls. Look at our advertisement of these costly premiums.

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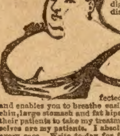

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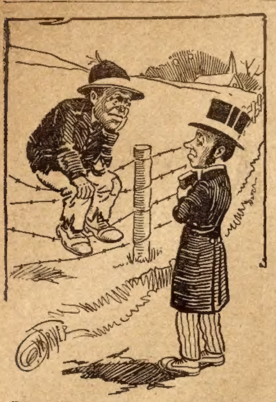


Parson—Do you know anything about the evil influence of liquor?

Rummy Robinson—Yes, sir! One time I drank a quart of hard cider and it made me foolish enough to saw a cord of wood.

Taking No Chances.

Caller—I hope you don't let your boss see you shooting craps, my lad?

Office Boy—You bet I don't, mister. De last time he saw me he got in de game and won me week's salary.

The Best Baby in the World.

"Oh, my dear," said the new proud mother to her husband. "I wish you could see the new baby across the way. It's perfectly lovely! Such a delicate, sweet little creature as it is! It's a perfect little cherub, with the loveliest eyes, the sweetest little mouth, and the cunningest little nose. It looks as if it had just dropped from heaven, and every tiny feature had been fashioned by the angels."

"Is it as nice as our baby?" quickly asked her husband.

"Mercy, no! Not half!" was the emphatic reply that came from the vicinity of the daintily ruffled crib.

Quieted Him.

"Little boy," protested the pious old gentleman, "are you not ashamed to catch fish on the sabbath? What would the good deacon say?"

"Not much," replied the lad as he hooked another pickerel.

"And why not?"

"Because these fish are the good deacon's breakfast. I am his little boy."

Waste of Energy.

The prize hen resolved to quit laying.

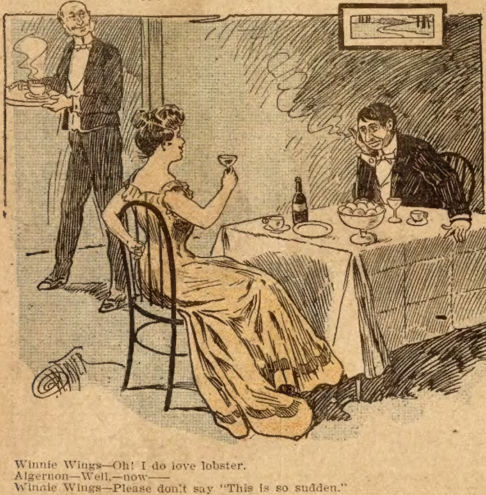
"It seems so utterly absurd," she clucked, "for a $500 fowl to spend her time and strength in turning out eggs at 36 cents a dozen."

Perching herself on her exclusive roost, she eyed the common barnyard hens below her with lofty disdain.

Necessity for Action.

Nan—I was astonished to learn that Lil Billiwink had gone and married that Spriggins boy. Why, she's a good ten years older than he is.

Fan—I know it, but it had narrowed down to a choice between him and his father, and she had to decide quick.



Winnie Wings—Oh! I do love lobster.

Algernon—Well,—now——

Winnie Wings—Please don't say "This is so sudden."

Guard Your Tongue.

"You never can tell," observed Uncle Allen Sparks, "what lasting results may be accomplished by an earnest word spoken at the right time. Many a man has had the shape of his nose changed for life by calling another man a liar."

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of THE LEDGER will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

Rider Agents Wanted

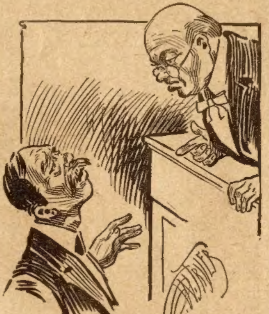
in each town to ride and exhibit sample 1908 model. *Write for Special Offer.*
Finest Guaranteed 1908 Models $10 to $27
with Coaster-Brakes and Puncture-Proof tires.
1906 & 1907 Models all of best makes $7 to $12
500 Second-Hand Wheels
All makes and models, good as new .... $3 to $8
Great Factory Clearing Sale.
We Ship On Approval *without a cent deposit, pay the freight* and allow
TEN DAYS' FREE TRIAL.
Tires, coaster-brakes, parts, repairs and sundries, half usual prices. Do not buy till you get our catalogs and offer. *Write now.*
MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. K53 Chicago

PORTRAIT AGENTS MAKE BIG MONEY

in handling our High Grade Goods which we sell at low prices. We guarantee our portraits to deliver and give the best of satisfaction. Our line of frames, sheet pictures and pillow tops is unsurpassed. Credit given. We make prompt shipments. Ask for catalog. If you are looking for a reliable and competent house to handle your business, send it to ADAM J. KROLL & CO., Dept. P, 722 New Era Bldg., CHICAGO

You Can Make $500 With This In Next 3 Months

Hammer
Hatchet, Nail Claw, Wire Cutter, Leather Punch, Pinchers
Screw Driver, Staple Puller
8 TOOLS IN ONE
Every farmer wants one at sight. No trouble to sell and pays good profits. One agent makes $1,500 a year selling our tools. Many others doing almost as well. Write today for our special price to agents and Agents' Guide "The Way to Win" also catalog full of money makers. FOOTE MFG. CO. Dept. 102 Dayton, O.
Great Agents Supply House, formerly of Fredericktown



Squire Holdem—Twenty-five dollars and costs.

Prisoner—Is that the best you can do?

Squire Holdem—The best I can do? What do you mean?

Prisoner—I've been before you so often you ought to give me wholesale rates and a special discount.

Progress of Science.

Fair Patient—I suffer greatly from insomnia, doctor.

Doctor—You should eat something just before retiring.

Fair Patient—But you once told me never to eat anything before going to bed.

Doctor—Oh, that was a year ago. Science has made rapid strides since then.

Boarding and Lodging.

Stranger (sampling Dublin stout with evident appreciation)—Really, this is splendid stuff. They say it is both meat and drink.

Bystander (interrupting)—Shure, an' it's roight ye are, sor; an' if ye take plenty av it it'll foind ye lodgings too.

TICKLISH

Unhandy.

Druggist—Shall I put the pills in a box for you?

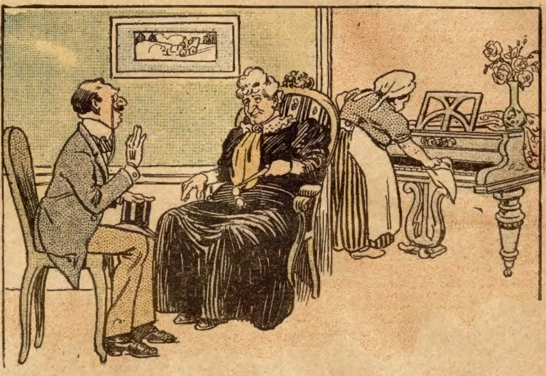
Customer—Certainly. Do you suppose I want to roll them home?

Truthful Norah.

"Norah, inasmuch as your mistress is not at home, you will please not tell her we called."

"I won't have to, leddies. She knows it."

HE RECOGNIZED THE MUSIC.



He—How exquisitely your daughter plays, madame! With what art she interprets this magnificent modern fantasy. It's from Debussy, isn't it?

She—I don't think so, sir! It's the maid dusting the piano!

Good News for the Deaf.

A celebrated New York Aurist has been selected to demonstrate to deaf people that deafness is a disease and can be cured rapidly and easily in your own home. He proposes to prove this fact by sending to any person having trouble with their ears a trial treatment of this new method absolutely free. We advise all people who have trouble with their ears to immediately address Dr. Edward Gardner, Suite 313, No. 40 West Thirty-third street, New York City, and we wish to assure them that they will receive by return mail absolutely free, a "Trial Treatment."

In the Meshes of the Law.

Lawyer—Good morning, doctor! I wish you would come around to the courtroom to testify against the faith-cure crank who refused to get a physician for his sick child. You see our case is somewhat weakened by the fact that his child has got well.

Great Physician (sorrowfully)—I can't possibly come. One of my children has just died.

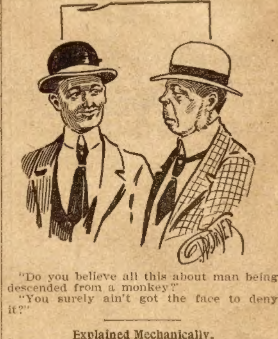
Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhœa, Displacements, Painful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian troubles. It cured me in one month. It is a simple, harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one having the recipe. I will send it free to every suffering sister who writes to me. Address Mrs. A. Hudnut South Bend, Indiana.

Live and Let Live.

"Do you preach without notes," queried a member of the church committee that was seeking a pastor to fill a vacancy.

"Well," rejoined the good man with a merry twinkle in his eye, "I sometimes have occasion to use bank notes."



"Do you believe all this about man being descended from a monkey?"

"You surely ain't got the face to deny it?"

Explained Mechanically.

"When I am busily engaged in thinking," remarked the doctor, "all the noises on earth can't disturb me."

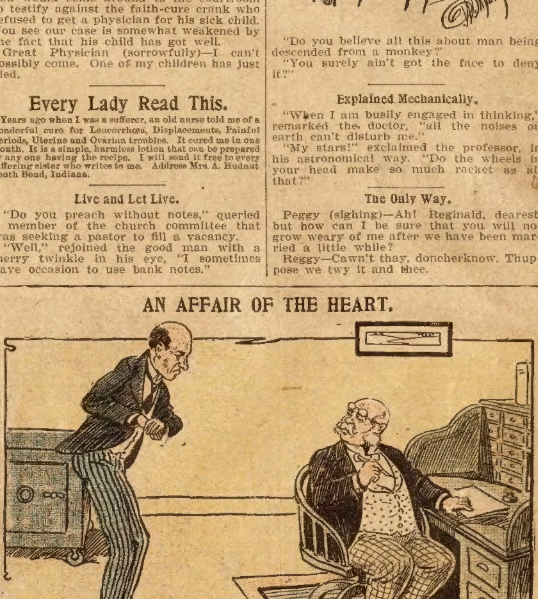
"My stars!" exclaimed the professor, in his astronomical way. "Do the wheels in your head make so much racket as all that?"

The Only Way.

Peggy (sighing)—Ah! Reginald, dearest, but how can I be sure that you will not grow weary of me after we have been married a little while?

Reggy—Cawn't thay, doncherknow. Thuppose we twy it and thee.

AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART.



Clerk—I should like to ask, sir, if my pay would be deducted if I took a day off to get married?

Employer—Of course! Two dollars would be deducted.

Clerk—O, well! I guess I'll remain single!

TACKLES

"COFFEE GRUNTERS"

Ever See One?

Thoughtful people have a laugh on coffee cranks now and then.

"I had used coffee ever since I was a small child," writes an Ind. lady, "and have always had bad spells with my stomach.

"Last spring just after I began housekeeping, I had a terrible time with my stomach and head. My husband bought a package of Postum and asked me to try it.

"I laughed at it because none of my folks would ever try it. But I made some the following morning, following directions on the package, about boiling it well.

"I was greatly pleased with the results and kept right on using it. Now I wouldn't drink anything else. I tell every old coffee 'grunter' I see, about Postum, and all my folks and my husband's people except a few cranks, use Postum instead of Coffee.

"When put to soak in cold water over night and then boiled 15 minutes in the morning while getting breakfast it makes a delicious drink."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Bursting Shells.

"Ut's a poor soldier yez are," bantered Larry.

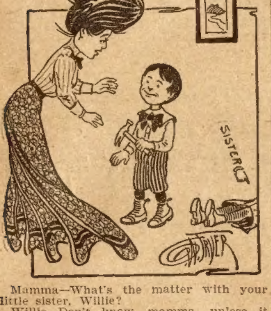
"Phoy should yez say thot?" replied Denny in injured tones. "During th' great battle wasn't Oi where th' shells wor thickest?"

"Yez wor thot! Oi hurr-rud th' corporal say yez got so scared yez wint into a barn awn stuck yez head into an egg crate, bedad!"

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.



Mamma—What's the matter with your little sister, Willie?

Willie—Don't know, mamma, unless it was 'cos there was a fly on her head, but I killed it with papa's hammer.

CURE FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO

The Kansas Anti-Liquor Society is mailing free a receipt for the cure of the liquor habit. It can be given secretly in food. Also one for tobacco habit that can be given secretly. The only request they make is that you do not sell receipts, but give copies to friends. Address, with stamp, Kansas Anti-Liquor Society, 680 Gray Building, Kansas City, Mo.

Inquisitive.

Old Lady—Do I get out here?

Conductor—Certainly, if you wish.

Old Lady—Is this my station?

Conductor—I don't know. Where è you going?

Old Lady—Such impudence. It's none of your business where I'm going.

Resented the Remark.

"They tell me," said the new reporter, who was doing an interview stunt, "that you have succeeded in forging your way to the front."

"Sir," replied the self-made man, coldly, "you have been misinformed. I'm no forger."

No Cure for Snake Bites.

Yeast—Isn't it surprising how many of the Southern States are turning to prohibition?

Crimsonbeak—Yes; why, there won't be any inducement for allowing a snake to bite a fellow down there any more!

Not a Case for Repairs.

"I wish you'd tell me what ails this watch," said the caller, passing it over the showcase.

The jeweler took the timepiece and looked at it.

"Where did you get it?" he asked.

"At an auction store."

"That's all that ails it," said the jeweler, handing it back.

Privileged.

"Look! The corpulent gentleman at the other table has tucked his napkin under his chin without attracting attention."

"He must be rich."

"And he is eating with his knife."

"Gracious, he must be very wealthy."

"And stirring his coffe with his fork."

"Great Jupiter! He must be a newly made millionaire."

Duplicates.

Customer (a day or two after Christmas)—I suppose the financial stringency gave your holiday trade something of a setback.

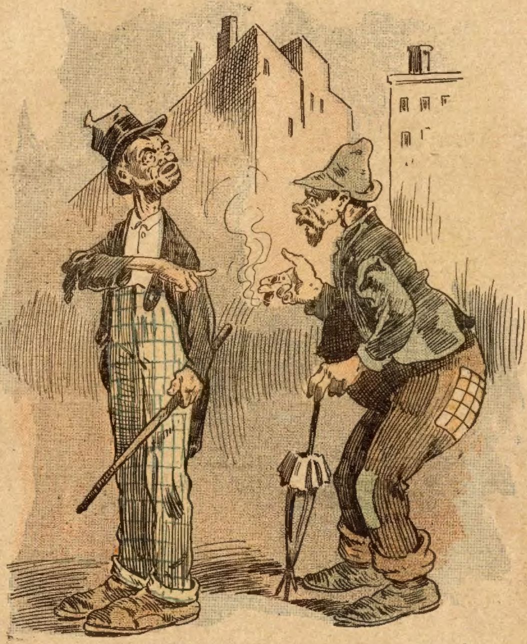
Fancy Queensware Dealer—I wouldn't have minded that so much if I hadn't got so many sets back.

Must Have Had Faults.

"Here is an account of a man who traded his wife for horse.

"That's so? What was the matter with the horse?

IN THE BACK YARD.



First Hobo—On de level, Willie, where did yer get dat swell pair of pants?
Second Hobo—Why, where dey keeps a line of clothes, of course.

Considerate Youth.

The Boss—By the way, James you were late again this morning.

Office Boy—Yes, sir.

The Boss—Why didn't you come to me and offer some kind of an excuse?

Office Boy—Because, sir, I didn't want to deprive you of the pleasure of jumping on me with both feet.

Much the Same.

"I understand you married a tanner," said one woman to another, as they met in after years.

"Well, something like that," answered the other. "My husband is a country school teacher."

More Information Wanted.

"Now, said the lecturer, as he folded up his manuscript after having given the pupils of the night school a discourse on the wonders of chemistry, "I shall be pleased to answer any questions you wish to ask."

"What becomes of all the corks?" asked a shaggy-haired boy in the audience.

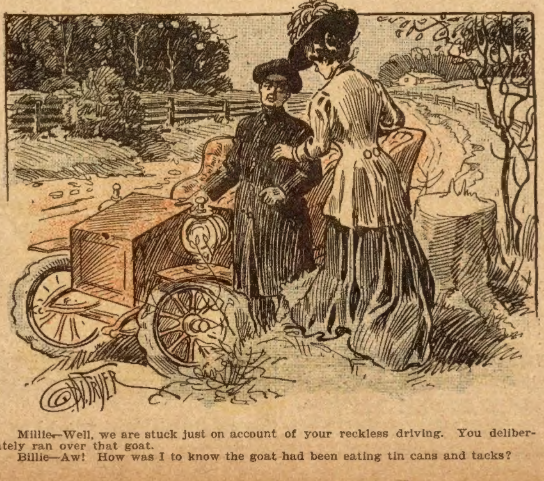
Cruel.

Gunner—So the celebrated poet married Miss Penner, the short-story writer?

Guyer—Yes, and some of their wedding presents were cruel insinuations.

Gunner—What did they receive?

Guyer—Sixteen waste baskets embellished with ribbons.



Millie—Well, we are stuck just on account of your reckless driving. You deliberately ran over that goat.
Billie—Aw! How was I to know the goat had been eating tin cans and tacks?

AGENTS WANTED

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EASY WORK-GOOD PAY

Make big money in your own town. $75.00 to $150.00 a month easily earned. No experience or money necessary. We back you with our capital and teach you the business. Elegant line of samples free. PANTS $2.50 up SUITS $9.00 up Express Prepaid. Every garment made to measure in latest city style—fit and workmanship guaranteed. One hustling agent wanted in every town. Exclusive territory. Write for agent's outfit—FREE.
THE PROGRESS TAILORING CO., 150E Harrison Street, Chicago

$36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES TO MEN with rigs. JAVELLE CO., PARSONS, Kans.

$8 Paid Per 100 for Distributing Samples of Washing fluid. Send 6c. stamp. A. W. SCOTT, COHOES, N. Y.

AGENTS WANTED to sell pocket knives with name and photo on handle; write for terms. Morris Cutlery Co., Morris, Ill., P.O. Box A

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES to men with rigs to introduce poultry compound. Year's contract. IMPERIAL MFG. CO., DEPT. 1 PARSONS, KANS.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HERBENE AGENCY Co., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

$150. A MONTH PROFIT E. B. ROBERTS, BERKSHIRE CO., MASS. earns selling Electric Combs. YOU CAN EARN IT Dr. C. L. HULL, 1431 Penn Ave., Pittsburg, Pa.

SELL TOBACCO and CIGARS, locally or traveling. Salary or commission. Full time or side line. Good pay; promotion; experience unnecessary. Write Morotock Tobacco Works, Box C 18, Danville, Va.

AGENTS. $150.00 per month easily made selling my new patent Floor Mop. Sells like wildfire. If you want a Cracker Jack article write to E. HILKER, 371 Grand Ave., CHICAGO

AGENTS to sell New York Suburban lots, $20 buys a lot; easy terms; man made $5,000 last year, several made $1,500 working nights. You can do same. Write for maps and particulars. W. C. REEVES & CO., Dept. A, 1188 Broadway, New York City.

$3 a Day Sure Send us your address and we will show you how to make $3 a day absolutely sure; we furnish the work and teach you free, you work in the locality where you live. Send us your address and we will explain the business fully, remember we guarantee a clear profit of $3 for every day's work, absolutely sure. Write at once. ROYAL MANUFACTURING CO., Box 1016 Detroit, Mich.

AGENTS WANTED Sell our Big $1.00 bottle Sarsaparilla for 39 cents. 200 Per Cent Profit. Best Seller. Finest Medicine. Complies with pure drug law. Everyone buys. Write now for terms. F. R. GREENE, 27 Lake St., Chicago

MEN WANTED in every locality in the United States to advertise our goods, tack up showcards in all conspicuous places and distribute small advertising matter. Commission or salary $83 per month and expenses $4 per day. Steady work the year round; entirely new plan; no experience required. Write for particulars. WM. R. WARNER MED. CO., London, Ont., Canada

AGENTS GET THIS $200 Taking only one order a day for our high-class, medium priced made-to-order Suits, Overcoats and Trousers, will give you a steady monthly income of $200.00 or more. No previous experience needed to succeed—our special guarantee plan gets the orders. Large Sample Outfit in Traveling Case furnished live hustlers free. Write now and get into business backed by big house. We will make you a cracker-jack, well-dressed salesman with money. WARRINGTON WORSTED & WOOLEN MILLS Dept. 80 178 Adams St., Chicago.

USE OUR MONEY Establish a pleasant, profitable and lasting business of your own. Be your own boss. We start you in the portrait business which will make you independent. We are practical men having worked up from the ranks ourselves. We are glad to help you. What we did you can do. Free Outfit. Our 248 page book explains everything. Write for it today. A SNAP For LIVE AGENTS Consolidated Portrait Co., 290-30 W. Adams St., Chicago

MAKE MONEY EASY Agents wanted in every county to sell the popular Novelty Knives for Christmas Gifts with name, address, photo, lodge emblem, etc., on handle. AGENTS EARN $75 to $300 A MONTH (We show you how) Big profits—quick sales—exclusive territory. Write quick for our liberal money making special offer to agents. Our new self-sharpening scissors are the quickest sellers for lady agents. NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., 23 BAR STREET, CANTON, O.

BIG MAIL FREE! POST OFFICE Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the Agent's Directory List for several years and refer to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our Agents' Directory List as above stated. Write today. Address AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST, INDIANA, Indiana County, PENNA.

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

Free $1.00 Coupon
When mailed to Magic Foot Draft Co., Jackson, Mich., this will entitle anyone with
RHEUMATISM
to receive prepaid, FREE TO TRY, a regular Dollar pair of Magic Foot Drafts and valuable New Book (in colors) on Rheumatism.

Name.......................................

Address.......................................

Only one trial pair to one address. RZ4.

If you have rheumatism cut out this free dollar coupon and send it to us with your name and address plainly written on the blank lines. Return mail will bring you—free to try—a Dollar pair of the famous Magic Foot Drafts, the great Michigan remedy for rheumatism. They are curing very bad cases of every kind of rheumatism, both chronic and acute, no matter how severe. They are curing cases of 30 and 40 years' suffering, after doctors and baths and medicines had failed. Send us the coupon today. When the Drafts come, try them. If you are satisfied with the benefit received—then you can send us One Dollar. If not, we take your simple say so, and the Drafts cost you absolutely nothing. Are they not worth trying on that basis? Our faith is strong that they will cure you, so cut out and send the coupon today to Magic Foot Draft Co., RZ4, Oliver Bldg., Jackson, Mich. Send no money—just the coupon. Write today.

TRADE MARK MAGIC

$170 Genuine Confederate money for $1. $50 for 50c. ROBERT B. MAXWELL, South Bend, Ind.

TOBACCO HABIT CURED. No risk. Safe. Sure. Permanent. Address NI-KO CURE, Wichita, Kans.

MONEY Made quickly by smart men. T. Artol Co., 115 Nassau St., N. Y.

PEACH TREES 12 Elbertas for $1.00, delivered free. Catalog free. Rochester Nurseries, Rochester, N. Y.

100 Post Cards Free Fine assortment. Make big money selling them. Send 10c for postage, etc., on big lot, and our great offer & catalog (3 lots 25c) B. BANNER CO., 1671 N. Fairfield Av. Chicago

PERFUMED PILLOWS. The Latest Fad. A pillow that stays perfumed with the finest imported odors. Send 10c for sample pillow and instructions how to get a Watch. G. WILEY & CO., Aurora, Ill.

WANTED Men to learn the barber trade few weeks completes, tools included, more demands than all other trades, write nearest branch, Moler System of Colleges, Chicago, Ill., St Louis, Mo., Kansas City, Mo., Cincinnati, O., Indianapolis, Ind., Atlanta, Ga., New Orleans, La., Dallas or San Antonio, Tex

SEA SHELLS Your collection will be more valuable if you know the names. Catalog describing and illustrating hundreds of rare and curious varieties free if you mention this paper. Iowa Bird Co., Des Moines, Iowa

THE E-Z TRUSS Do you want to Cure your rupture? Our new rupture appliance will do it. Sent on 5 days' free trial. No C. O. D., at end of 5 days send money or return goods. Write for booklet or send measure. Address
THE EASY TRUSS CO., Kalamazoo, Mich.

YOUR FORTUNE TOLD FREE
PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE REVEALED
All Matters of Life, Friends, Business, Travel, Change, Love, Marriage, Health, PLAINLY TOLD. Sent sealed for 2-cent stamp and Birth date. Address PROF. LILLY, 43 Lewis Block, BUFFALO, N. Y., Dep. 21

SUPERFLUOUS HAIR
PERFECTLY REMOVED.
I have a safe and positively SURE way to take hairs off face, neck, arms, etc., FOREVER. I HAVE THE TRUE SECRET. Write for Information. I send it sealed. FREE. Address HELEN DOUGLAS, 20 E. 22 St. New York

CORNS
A-Corn Salve works like magic in removing corns quickly and painlessly. Its application brings instant relief, and certain cure. No danger from razor cuts.
15 cents at druggist's or by mail.
Giant Chemical Co., Philadelphia.

STRONG ARMS
For 10c in Stamps or Coin.
I will send, as long as they last, one of my charts showing exercises that will quickly build up shoulders, arms, forearms and hands without any apparatus. They are beautifully illustrated with twenty halftone cuts. Regular price 25 cents.
PROF. ANTHONY BARKER,
180 Barker Bldg., 110 West 42d St., New York Cit

CARTOONING
ILLUSTRATING
Law, Pharmacy, Bookkeeping, Stenography, Mechanical Drawing, Journalism Taught by Mail. Write today for special offer saving time and money. State course desired. Address
NATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
42 N. Penn. St., Indianapolis, U.S.A.

FREE GOLD Watch
This beautifully engraved Solid Gold Plated American Watch, equal in appearance to a $25 year Solid Gold Filled Watch, fully warranted to keep correct time, is given free to anyone for selling only 20 of our Magic Stone Set Initial Bangle Rings at 10 cts. each. Order the 20 rings today and when sold send us the $2.00 and we will send you the watch and guarantee safe delivery. STANDARD JEWELRY CO., Dept. 5 CHICAGO, ILL.

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

The Crime of the Black Thirteen

By LIEUT. GERALD CARLTON

[Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 1, Jan. 4. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XII.

ERNEST BLANDFORD INVESTIGATES.

It is no longer necessary to go back to the night of the Kingsley murder, as the crime has been explained as well as the causes that led to it.

But an almost equally exciting matter must have a place here—the mysterious disappearance of the murdered man's body, which had been left by Porter at the D—— railway station, pending the action of the coroner.

The local authorities were at their wits' ends to discover how the body had been removed and at what hour.

Jerry, the night porter at the station, was questioned, but he evidently could let no light on the mystery and seemed to be as much puzzled and perplexed as the others.

The reader must not forget, however, that the porter was in the pay of Rariton Darkhurst, and that he no doubt knew much more about the disappearance of the body than he pretended to.

But this was not the sole trouble with which the authorities had to deal. Porter and Lumley had also vanished in a most inexplicable manner.

The night superintendent detailed what had occurred on the arrival of Kingsley's body on the express. Outside of this he knew nothing. He did not know even in which part of town the engineer lived.

And thus the matter stood when the news reached Pinkerton.

Ernest Blandford, Porter's partner, was apprised of the occurrence by the detective agency and instructed to set out immediately for D—— and investigate the matter thoroughly.

To do this more effectively Blandford thought it advisable to resort to a disguise, so he disguised himself as an itinerant preacher after which he left for his destination.

As bad luck would have it his train met with a serious accident. The engine was derailed and thrown down a steep embankment. No lives were lost, but the mishap made necessary a delay of seven hours.

The result was that Blandford did not get to D—— till darkness had set in; then he called on the night superintendent, to whom we have earlier alluded.

The latter detailed what little he knew of the occurence in almost the same words as Blandford had heard from Pinkerton in Manhattan. But the official's account afforded little or no clue, and not a single grain of comfort.

Then Blandford called on the chief of police. The chief knew absolutely nothing, so the detective went away not much the wiser.

The chief was very anxious, however, to know who the detective was, and Blandford told him after obtaining his promise to keep his identity secret.

"That's all right," declared the country official. "In your case, sir, I appreciate the value of discretion. But recollect, Mr. Blandford, if I can serve you in any way, don't be backward. Let me know, will you?"

Ernest Blandford promised and left. That he didn't think much of the astuteness of the police in that country town was clearly evident.

"They're a set of incompetents," said Blandford, "from the chief down. Now to find out where Lumley lives when he's in D——. I may yet get some information from the owner of the house."

There was a rather a neat restaurant near the railway station, and here Blandford thought he might drop in and take some refreshment, as he had not eaten since early morning. He approached a table where sat two men who appeared to be farmers. One was a jolly, good-natured looking fellow; the other a ruddy-faced, bewhiskered, grouchy person.

The last was laying down the law in great shape. To listen to him Blandford sat at an adjoining table, and after giving his order, awaited the bewhiskered man's torrent of words.

The conversation ran after this fashion:

"Now, look ye here, Jones," proceeded the bewhiskered gentleman, with a sudden ferocity of manner. "I don't care a button what nobody says or what nobody thinks, this here police force we have ain't no good, nohow. Catch on, boy? I say they ain't no good, and Ebenezer Shiner means what he says every time, and don't you forget it, old chap."

"Why, what's wrong with them?" asked Jones, good-humoredly. "Anything that can't be mended?"

'Everything's wrong with them," was the indignant retort of Ebenezer Shiner. "Don't tell me that the police force o' this town has any gumption in 'em, 'cause I won't believe it! The chief thinks he knows everything, don't he? and the rest of 'em's just as lopsided in their views."

Jones smiled.

"Perhaps you're too hard, Ebenezer," said Jones, gently. "What have they done, now?"

"Well, they haven't recovered my canvas-covered wagon, for one thing," replied the incensed Shiner.

Jones pricked up his ears at once. Here was news for him.

"Canvas-covered wagon?" he repeated, mechanically.

"Yes, I said canvas-covered wagon, and I mean it," retorted the irascible Ebenezer. "You saw that canvas-covered wagon o' mine, didn't you?"—belligerently.

"Why, yes—that is—I—"

But here Jones was again interrupted by an angry outburst from Ebenezer, who was under the influence of liquor, as was indicated by his face, which now was as lurid as a turkey cock's comb, while his utterances were thick from sudden and unreasonable spasms of temper.

"What is—that is! Nothin' is! Hanged for a story! Say, you never seen it! Say so at once! Call me a liar! I say a canvas-covered wagon; you say 'what is?' What do you mean by 'what is?'—that is what I should like to know!" furiously continued Ebenezer, waxing angrier.

"Shiner, have you gone crazy?" said Jones, who listened calmly to the foregoing meaningless jargon, not knowing what to make of it. "Will you listen a moment, without flying into a temper over nothing? Am I to understand that you lost a wagon? Is that the nature of your grievance against the police?"

"It was stolen," blurted Ebenezer, whose unreasonable rage was unsubdued. "Stolen, not lost; do you hear? You seen the canvas-covered wagon! Don't say you didn't, for you did! Weren't you going to buy it of me? Weren't you? Don't tell me! And I wouldn't let it go unless you gave me thirty more down!"

"I recollect the occurrence," said Jones, quietly, "and the fact that you held out for more than the vehicle was worth, prevented the sale. Now just be reasonable! Flying off will do no good, besides, it will prevent you from detailing the real nature of your case. Now, let us get at it like men of sense. Did I understand you to say that that particular conveyance was stolen? Let it be plain 'yes' or 'no,' without going into heroics."

"Yes, it was stolen."

"When?"

"Three nights ago."

Jones looked grave.

"When?"

"Three nights ago, I said," irascibly from the tempestuous Shiner.

"Yes, I know. What hour?"

"Between twelve and one."

"Between twelve and one," Jones repeated. "It was one o'clock to the minute," he quickly corrected the other, with a still more serious look on his good-humored face.

It was Ebenezer's turn now to be surprised.

"You 'pear to know the time better'n me," he sharply retorted.

"That's very natural."

"How nateral?"

"Because I was out that night," was the reply.

"An' you helped steal my wagon," with a look of profound reproach on his bewhiskered face. "Benny Jones, I'd never have believed it of you. Well," he pursued deeply hurt and more deeply moved, "a man can't tell nowadays who he takes to his buzzum. I wouldn't wish it for a hundred dollars as how you said that, Benny Jones."

"Stop a moment—drive slower," expostulated Jones. "I never said I stole your wagon, did I?"

"Well, not quite in them words," replied Ebenezer, his eyes filling and his voice choking with sobs, "but its all the same—all the same. I could weep bitter tears, I could. Gosh-hanged, I could cry like a big baby."

At this point Ebenezer was so overcome that he broke down completely. Then began a maudlin snivel followed by a torrent of tears, through which was exuded a goodly portion of the liquor he had imbibed that day and previous days since he had lost his property.

Jones, utterly unmoved, let Ebenezer have his cry out. He knew well what to attribute that sort of emotion to, so, instead of trying to comfort his half-intoxicated friend, he calmly ordered a cigar, lit it, and went on smoking as if nothing had happened.

When Ebenezer had had his "boo-hoo" out Jones again tackled him by calmly saying:

"Are you through, now?"

"Y-e-s." And with final sob Ebenezer wiped the tears from his eyes.

"And, now, I suppose, you will listen to reason?" said the imperturbable Jones, after a few more placid whiffs at his weed.

Ebenezer shook his head sorrowfully.

"I hope you're not going through the same performance again," said Jones. "For, if you are, I'm off. Now, just listen, and don't be a fool. I'm going to tell you something which will surprise you, no doubt. You say you lost your wagon three nights ago? Three nights ago I was on my way to town. Do you follow me?"

Ebenezer's head bobbed up and down maudlinly. Ernest Blandford laid his knife and fork aside and was listening with due attention to what followed.

"I left my place at twenty minutes of twelve," continued Jones. "I was due in town at one-thirty. When a little more than a mile from your farm I met a burly, red-faced man on the road. I took him to be some farmer from further up the island; anyhow, he said he was a stranger. He stopped me, and we got into conversation. He finally made some inquiries about a canvas-covered wagon, and where he could get one, saying that he would pay a reasonable price for its use. I thought of you, and so recommended him. He asked me where you lived. I told him; also that there was no doubt if he was willing to give you your price, you would let him have the conveyance."

Here Ebenezer interrupted with a groan:

"He took it! He took it!" he moaned, wiping again at his eyes.

"He took it, did he?" said Jones.

"Yes, he stole it."

"I met this man at one o'clock, or, it might be four or five minutes after. I knew you had gone to bed," pursued Jones, "and fearing your dogs would worry the fellow before he could rouse you, I ran back and gave him something to quiet them—a sort of patent dog-food, for which he thanked me."

"New-fangled dog-biscuit—yes, I know," mumbled the disconsolate, though now fast-sobering Ebenezer. "Yes, I found some of it near the kennel."

"And that was the last I saw of the man," finished Jones.

Now, Ernest Blandford had been listening to the foregoing, highly amused at the comedy part of it, but the trouble was he couldn't connect it with the disappearance of Porter and Adam Lumley, the engineer.

But he was soon to have something that greatly enlightened him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PURSUING PARTY.

We shall try now to detail Ebenezer's subsequent adventures that night.

Unfortunately for the farmer, after ordering Red to stop and surrender his property, he bethought him of an ancient shot-gun, an heirloom of the farm. This shot-gun had not been discharged in a score of years. Now, when an impulsive mortal like Ebenezer Shiner is aroused suddenly from a sound sleep, it is but natural to expect that he has not the clearest judgment, especially under certain conditions, and the surreptitious filching of Shiner's property was one of these conditions.

With the sleep still in his eyes, after holding the hurried talk with Red and seeing that soft words were of no use, Ebenezer made a dash for the shot-gun. He didn't even know it was loaded, so long was it since it had been used. It was enough for him that it would frighten this midnight prowler and horsethief.

With another warning to Red, Ebenezer closed his eyes and desperately pressed the trigger.

The report of the shot-gun was deafening. Not alone did it go off with a detonation of thunder, which seemed to shake the house to its very foundations, but the recoil catapulted Ebenezer to the further end of his bedroom.

For a couple of minutes the irascible farmer was completely stunned. When he came to he thought that every bone in his body was broken; but assuring himself that such was not the case, he set up a yelling that not only alarmed the inmates of the house, but the entire neighborhood as well.

Lights flashed from every window of the homestead, and all was absolute consternation and confusion.

Members of Ebenezer's household could arrive at no other conclusion but that he had been fooling with some dynamite cartridges which he had for blasting purposes, there being a quarry on his farm, and had blown himself up.

By this time his neighbors from other farms had got there, and Ebenezer recovered so far as to detail a disjointed explanation of the occurrence, and steps were immediately taken to go in pursuit of the daring robbers, who, by this time, however, had a full half an hour's start.

Finally Ebenezer mustered his forces. These were comprised of the male portion of his own household and three or four men from the adjoining farms, who, in the yelling and terrific din that followed the discharge of the shot-gun, had hastened to the spot.

Ebenezer started in to arm the proposed pursuing party. Every nook and corner of the farm-house was ransacked for weapons, and the arsenal collected comprised the following: Two flint-locks, rare relics of a past epoch in American history, three rifles, antedating the Civil War, two cavalry sabers, taken from the Hessians in the War of Independence, one Winchester and four Colt's revolvers, not to mention the shot-gun, which treated Ebenezer with such scant courtesy.

To man this array of weapons were eight men, including the ferocious and bewhiskered Ebenezer himserf.

The next thing was to procure horses or conveyances for the party. At last it was decided that Ebenezer and his men should go accoutered in true cavalry style, and as this dictum was conceded unanimously by the rest, the horses were got together and saddled and bridled for the war.

"Now, commander-in-chief," said a farmer named Jarvis, the wit and wag of that section of the country—at least so was he regarded—addressing Ebenezer, "what is it to be, D—— or P——. D—— is the devil and P—— is Parson, you know! Ah, ha, ha!"

"'Tain't no laughing matter," peevishly grunted Ebenezer. "I've been robbed of my canvas-covered wagon, I have. It's not just right to try and come the funny over a man's misfortunes. Besides, that's not wit, nohow, nor humor neither," he added acridly.

This muzzled Jarvis' tongue for the rest of the night. He wilted under Ebenezer's scathing retort as though he had been smashed over the face with a dish towel.

Now Ebenezer was in a quandary. Why he was so we shall explain. When he last saw Red and the canvas-covered wagon the horses' muzzles were pointed toward D——. But they might have been pointed in this direction under other circumstances. It might have been done by Red as a ruse. When Ebenezer closed his eyes and fired that soul-splitting shot, all the world was a blank to him for the time. The gun was in one part of the room, Ebenezer in the other. The recoil had so stunned his scattered senses that he could not think for at least ten minutes after; and during affairs, was it not more than likely that the midnight prowler might have turned the heads of the horses and gone in the opposite direction?

Well, as this reasoning, or any other reasoning, in fact, did not serve to put Ebenezer right, he finally decided to choose the road to D——.

"Gents," said Ebenezer at last, "I see nothing for it but to go to D——."

"All right. Let it be D—— then," agreed the rest; and at the word from Ebenezer the armed party of farmers put spurs to their horses and trotted off in the direction of the town.

From this point on we had best give the rest of the adventure in Ebenezer's own words, divesting the recital of a few of his pet phrases. We must bear in mind, of course, that Detective Blandford, in his disguise as an itinerant preacher, is paying rapt attention to this account.

Ebenezer had, in the meantime, sobered up considerably, so that his fiery and furious bluster is, in a measure, dispensed with.

"Your account is getting interesting," commented the pleasant-faced, though imperturbable Jones. "Go on, Shiner."

"Well," said Ebenezer, "we at last got started, and you never seen sich a calvalcade in all your born days. Talking about goulias," (he meant guerrillas) "them fellers in the war for the Union wasn't in it with us. No sir-ee, you can bet your sweet life on that. Going no further than myself—I'd a big calvary" (he meant cavalry) "saber hitched to my left side, and it clanked so at the heels of my 'cowhides' that it nigh frightened that critter of a horse of mine into fits. Besides, I'd an old flintlock musket strapped over my back and a couple o' pistols in an old rope as I'd round my waist. Now I didn't care a bit for this arsenal of weapons, but as I was commander o' the party, you know, I couldn't object. Besides, a feller named Snorer said it was the right sort o' thing. Snorer said he was a soger and that he ought to know. Well, I needn't go to describe the others was armed, but they all had some weapon or other, and swore as how they'd use 'em if they ever overhauled the robbers.

"Well, on we went, eight of us galloping abreast in the road, till bimeby one of the critter animals happened to kick out. Then come the fun, you can bet it was fun and no mistake, in the melley (he meant melee) "three of the party was sent kiting into a ditch, and we had to stop and fish 'em out. This caused a delay of ten minutes. Then it was suggested by the soger as how we should try to ride three abreast, leaving two to bring up the rear.

"I always fancied that that soger feller was having a fine laugh at us, but as he said he had been a soger I didn't say nothin', and so we went on and on till we was within three-quarters of a mile of the town. Snorer suggested something, and we all stopped like one man.

"'What's the matter, now?' asked a chap named Snooks. 'What are you all stopping for. This ain't D——, you set of idiots.'

"'S-h!' sed the soger, putting his fingers to his lips wise-like. 'Don't you see what's ahead of us? There's men in them woods,' sed he, 'and I can see something drawn up in the timber like a wagon.' That was enough for me. I said 'Push on—push on! Forward!'

"'Halt!' whispered the soger, and they did halt. 'Rear man to the front!' said the soger, military-like. 'What's that for?' asked I. 'Rear man to the front!' said the soger again. 'To reconnoiter,' sed he. 'That's what that's for.' And the soger was right.

"One of the men in the rear dismounted. There was a strip of woods in the turn of the road, and in we got among the trees and hid ourselves. You know this rear man who was told off? His name's Shilo. Well, Shilo, when he dismounted, started off to see what was going on down the road. He wasn't long gone when we heard a shot, then a second, and following them three more, one on the heels of the other.

"'Now!' said the soger, 'Forward march—trot!'

"'Reckon I've command of this here party,' sed I. But before I could drop another word I was nigh swept out of the saddle. I could see then that Snorer was a soger, and that I was nowhere. 'Gents, ride as if Old Harry had you,' sed the soger; and don't waste ammernition till you're within firing distance. That man must be saved if the old canvas-covered wagon goes to blazes!' sed he.

"You may be sure I didn't like that. But

(Continued on page fifteen.)

Mission Styles

Have become more than the fashion in the homes of the wealthy and the well-to do middle classes. I venture to say that the great majority of up-to-date homes have at least some mission furniture. That is why I am showing our readers today a Mission Clock of the choicest design. This is a clock for the parlor or dining room, and it is simply an elegant beauty as such and fits equally well in the sumptuous home of the millionaire or the plain and cheerful fireside of the workingman's house.

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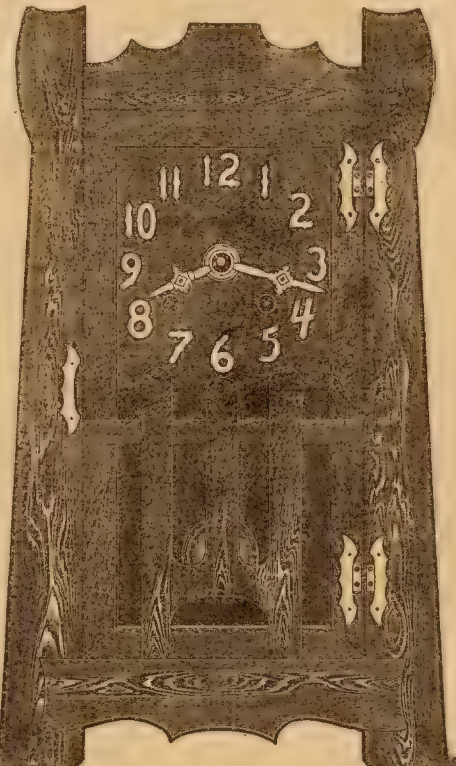

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BOY'S AND GIRL'S CORNER

Frank Tipton's Fortune;

Or, THE PERILS OF THE PLAINS

By WILL LISENBEE, Author of "The Young Bee Hunters," "Toby and Tom," "The Mystic Mine," "The Adventures of Tom Dayton," etc.

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Begun in No. 4, January 25. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

A MYSTERY.

The words of Frank Tipton sent a thrill of sudden fear to the heart of Ralph Rushton.

But he did not lose his presence of mind. With a careless air he reached for his cup of coffee with one hand and with the other drew cautiously from his belt a pistol and laid it at his side.

"This coffee is about right," he remarked in a calm voice. And then lowering his tone he continued, "You see I am ready for business whenever you say the word. What sort of a varment in human form can be hiding in those bushes? Is it white or a redskin?"

"I think it is a white man," said Frank in almost a whisper. "I am going to find out, and I want you to back me up with your pistol, but we must act as if we had not discovered the presence of the stranger."

"All right; go ahead."

"Suppose we go down to the spring and look for some game in the thicket?" said Frank, as he rose and took up his rifle. "We may run onto a wild turkey."

"All right, as soon as I finish my coffee," replied Ralph, draining his cup and picking up his rifle. "I'm with you."

The two walked leisurely along the edge of the thicket from which Frank had seen the pair of eyes looking forth, and then making a signal to Ralph to be on the alert, he pushed his way rapidly into the clump of bushes.

Stooping low as he went, he peered eagerly into every nook from which the strange face had looked at him, but it had vanished. No trace of any living thing was visible.

"There's nothing in here," Frank announced, looking about him in bewilderment, "neither man nor varment."

"Could you have been mistaken?" asked Ralph, as he joined his companion.

"I am sure I was not," said Frank. "It was a human face and a pair of human eyes I saw gazing at us from the thicket; but it has gone whatever it was."

"That is rather queer," commented Ralph. "Suppose we continue the search. Whatever it was, it could not have gotten entirely away in this short time."

The two explored every nook and corner of the thicket, but could find no solution to the mystery.

At last they were compelled to return to camp no wiser than they were at the outset of their search.

Frank threw himself in the shade of the sycamore and wiped the perspiration from his heated brow.

"I can't understand it at all," he said. "Who the Sam Hill could be prowling about here and escape in this way without as much as leaving a trace behind?"

"Well, there is one consolation," remarked Ralph, "whatever the critter is—man or beast—it is not likely to do us any harm so long as it keeps out of our way in the manner it is doing now."

"That is a philosophical way to look at it, and now suppose we finish our suppers."

"I have about finished," said Ralph, "but I think I can dispose of another dish of your plums. I am glad to see that there is a plentiful supply in the thicket yet."

When the boys had finished supper and cleared away the dishes, they decided to take a stroll through the grove and make a reconnoisance before night should set in.

Finding no trace of their mysterious visitor, they filled a bucket with water at the spring and returned to camp.

By this time the sun had gone down and night was settling rapidly over the plain.

Frank breathed a prayer of thankfulness that he was not alone, and he was doubly thankful that he had such a companion as Ralph Rushton. Already he was fast growing strongly attached to the youth who had so providentially came into his life, and he felt lighter of heart than he had felt for many days.

As the night settled, the full moon rose over the great plains, flooding the world with its silvery light.

It was a strange and beautiful scene. The boys sat in the shadow of the wagon watching the moon as it rose higher and higher. Far out on the plain, objects were plainly visible, and in the grove the shadows of the trees lay like etchings of black against the shimmering light.

The boys had much to talk about, and it was far into the night when they at last sought their blankets.

CHAPTER V.

BUFFALOES!

Despite the intense heat of the day, the night on the plains is cool and refreshing.

Ralph and Frank had barely stretched themselves on their blankets when they fell asleep.

Frank was the first to wake.

It was broad daylight when he opened his eyes. He sat up on his blanket sleepily. Ralph was still sleeping.

Frank drew on his clothes, and then as he glanced about him he gave a violent start and stood as if transfixed with amazement.

What he saw, was indeed enough to startle him.

Seated a few yards away, his back leaning against a tree, was a man of some fifty years. He was dressed in a buckskin suit and moccasins, and lying across his lap was a heavy rifle. His iron-gray hair fell to his shoulders, and between his bearded lips he held a short, black pipe, at which he was puffing complacently.

He laughed softly as he saw the look of utter amazement on the face of the youth.

"I reckon I've sorter got the drop on you," he said, an odd twinkle in his deep gray eye.

"Who are you?" asked Frank, finding his voice at last, "and what do you mean?"

At this juncture Ralph awoke with a start, and sat up on his blanket, gazing from Frank to the stranger in a sort of stupefied bewilderment.

"Youngsters," said the old man, rising, "if you will permit me, I will now retire. Happening along last night I found you both asleep, just like the babes in the woods. There is an old saying that one never meets a friend in the desert, and there are more foes lurking in this region than you dream of. Seeing you both asleep, I took the liberty to do guard duty for you till one of you should awake. Remember, it is always best to sleep with one eye open, in this country."

And without another word, the strange visitor strode away.

"Stay," cried Frank, won't you wait a moment—at least to let us thank you for your kindness?"

"No need of thanks, youngsters," replied the old man, without turning his head. And the next moment he had vanished from sight in the clump of plum bushes.

"Well, I'll be blowed if that don't beat me!" ejaculated Frank.

"Who is he? and where in the name of goodness did he come from?" asked Ralph, gazing after the stranger in wonderment.

"I haven't the faintest idea," replied Frank. "He was here when I awoke. You heard all he said. I can tell you nothing more."

"Well, he certainly is a queer customer. What can he be doing here?"

"A hunter, probably."

"An eccentric one, to say the least. But I can't understand why he should act the way he does."

"Nor I. I am sure it was he we saw yesterday peering at us from the thicket."

"There is no doubt of it."

"But where does he stay? There is no sign of a camp or any kind of place of abode, yet he seems to be lurking about the place, coming and vanishing at will."

"Whoever he is, or whatever his business is, he seems to be a friend."

"That's right. He has the air of an old plainsman who has spent much of his life on the frontier. I shouldn't wonder if he would be a pretty handy man to have around in case we were visited by a band of Comanches."

"That's right. I wish he had stayed long enough for us to get acquainted with him. Ought we to follow him and see where he goes?"

"It might displease him."

"You are right. He might resent being spied upon."

Ralph drew on his clothes hurriedly, and the two fell to work to prepare breakfast.

A dewy freshness was in the air, and along the pools of water in the ravine a faint mist hovered, fast turning to crimson under the rays of the sun, which had just risen above the swell to the east.

"It is a glorious morning," remarked Ralph. "What a delicious climate this would be if it were not so hot during the day. The air is like wine."

"They say that the climate of California is just like this all the time."

"Then I should certainly like to live there."

"You can have your wish if you will go with me."

"I'll do it if you will get my father's consent."

"I'll do my best."

"I'm afraid he won't let me go."

"Why?"

"Oh, as soon as my schooling is finished he wants me to go into his office and learn the business. He's a wholesale grocer. He is greatly engrossed in his business and thinks he ought to begin training me as soon as possible."

"A year in California wouldn't be bad training for you. I have always been told that knocking about the world is a great educator."

"I guess that's right. It gives a fellow a broader view of life, and teaches him something of human nature that he would not learn by remaining at one place."

"We'll try to make your father look at it in that light. Who knows, but he might want to establish a branch house in San Francisco, sometime?"

"Bless my soul! That is a capital idea. So he might. I wish you'd mention the matter to him and put it in that light."

"I shall, and if we don't see the Golden Coast together it won't be my fault."

When the two had eaten breakfast Frank brought the horses from where they had been picketed—a pair of claybank mustangs, clean-limbed, and range-bred, as tough as the antelope of the plains, a team which Caleb Wilson had traded for at Council Grove—one that was suited to stand the long, wearisome trip across the plains.

"We have no saddles," said Frank, "but we can strap a couple of blankets on their backs, which will serve our purpose. It may be that we shall find your father and his party without having to ride far."

"I hope so. But do you think it is wise for us to leave your wagon and outfit here? Some thief might happen along."

"That is hardly possible," replied Frank. "We can take a look about the surrounding country from the little hill over there before we start, and if no one is in sight it is not likely that any one would happen to come this way in our absence."

"How about the old hermit that paid us a visit this morning?"

"He could hardly carry the wagon and traps away if he tried, and if I judge him correctly, he is not the sort of person to do a thing of that kind."

"That's so. He really did us a good turn, and it's mean of me to suggest that he might not be straight."

When the horses were ready Frank filled a couple of canteens at the spring, and the pair mounted and rode away.

"Have you any idea as to the direction we ought to take?" asked Frank.

"South, the way we are going, is the direction I came from, though I might have been traveling in a circle, I was so confused."

They rode at a brisk gallop, for the air was still cool and they desired to get as far as possible on their way before day should grow too hot for rapid travel

As they rode southward they scanned the wide-stretching plain in every direction, but nowhere was there a sign of life.

But a mile further on, as they rode across the little swell in the plain, they came in sight of a wide, level valley lying miles and miles to the south. And across it was moving a dark mass like the shadow of a cloud.

They reined in their horses and sat watching it with breathless interest.

"Buffaloes!" cried Ralph.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD PLAINSMAN.

"Can it be possible that all that mass reaching for miles and miles across the valley is buffaloes?" cried Frank. "We saw many herds on our way from Council Grove, but never one like that."

"There must be hundreds of thousands," remarked Ralph. "I think it must be the same herd we sighted yesterday, as father and I were preparing to start on our hunt."

"They appear to be moving in this direction."

"Not exactly. They are moving, as it seems to me, in a northwesterly course, which would carry them to the west of us."

"I should hate to get in their course. Would it not be dangerous?"

"It would if the herd should become stampeded, but not otherwise. They generally move slowly when feeding, and one would have little trouble in keeping out of their way."

After watching the movements of the buffaloes for a few minutes, our young friends continued their course southward, veering a little to the east that they might avoid coming in contact with the immense herd.

They rode southward for a dozen miles, but no sign of Mr. Rushton and his party could be discovered.

The sun was now high in the heavens and the heat was intense. The water which the boys had brought with them was soon consumed, and they realized the necessity of starting on their return without delay.

The horses would soon be suffering for water, and there was no prospect of getting any till they should reach camp.

It was with a feeling of discouragement and dejection that they turned about and set their faces to the north.

It was near the middle of the afternoon when they reached camp. The horses demonstrated their burning thirst by taking the bits into their mouths and dashing into the first pool they came to as they turned into the little valley.

Leaping to the ground, Ralph and Frank lost no time in reaching the spring, where they drank deeply of the sparkling fluid.

"I tell you what, Frank," said Ralph, "it wouldn't take much of a temperance lecturer to convince a fellow that water is the best drink on earth if he could have his audience out here for a few days, would it?"

"I should say not. They say one never appreciates the blessings of plenty of water till he has crossed the desert."

Refilling their canteens, the boys led their horses in the direction of the camp.

They had almost reached the spot when Frank stopped abruptly, a startled exclamation escaping his lips.

"What is it?" asked Ralph in sudden alarm.

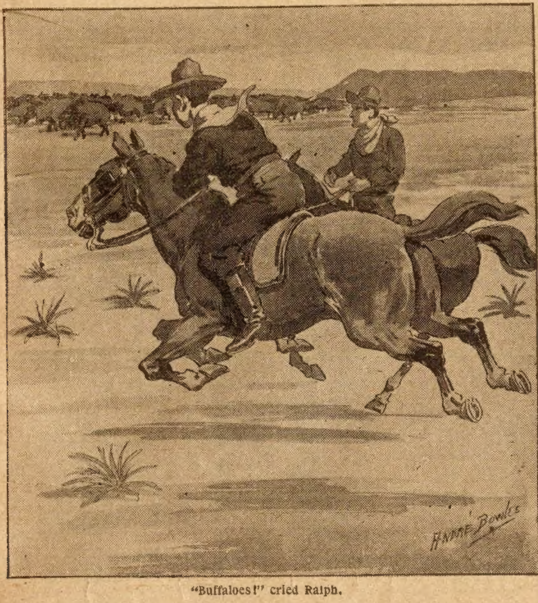
"Look!" cried Frank. "The wagon is gone!"

The two stood staring, first into each other's face and then at the spot from which the wagon had vanished.

"Great Scott! what can it mean?" gasped Ralph.

"Heaven only knows!" breathed Frank "This is terrible!"

"And to think that it is I who have brought this misfortune on you!" breathed Ralph. "In trying to help me out of a difficulty you have brought a greater calamity on yourself. It was selfish in me to allow you to risk leaving your property here unguarded."



"Buffaloes!" cried Ralph.

"You have no cause to blame yourself," broke in Frank. "If Comanches have raided the valley it is probably fortunate for me that I was not here. Let us look about the thickets. The thief may not have gotten entirely away yet."

A low laugh interrupted the pair, and the next instant the slouching figure of an old man—the visitor of the morning—emerged from the cover of a plum thicket and advanced across the open glade. "I hope you won't call me a meddler," he said, "but I thought it best to look after things a little, while you youngsters were away. So I just pushed your wagon back into the thicket a little ways so it would not be so apt to be seen by any redskins that might be passing this way."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Frank, a look of infinite relief coming over his face. "We feared that some one had made away with the wagon in our absence. I am sure we are very much obliged for your kindness."

"Don't mention it," broke in the stranger. "I'm not doing anything at present, but hanging around here waiting for something to turn up, and I don't mind looking after things a little for you youngsters in the meantime."

He was about to walk away when Frank called to him.

"Surely you are not going to run away again without giving us a chance to get acquainted with you, as you did this morning?" he said. "We would be glad to have you remain with us."

"Well, if you put it in that light, I don't mind," replied the stranger, turning and seating himself at the root of a tree. "I don't happen to have any cards with me, but you can call me Hicks, though some of the redskins I have had dealings with might be inclined to call me Old Nick."

Frank walked forward and held out his hand to the old man.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Hicks," he said. "I hope you will remain in camp with us while we stay here."

"Oh, thank you, my boy. I may stay long enough to sample your grub, as you are so kind to invite me."

"Do," urged Frank. "We will have dinner right away."

Ralph came up and shook hands with the visitor, and the three were soon conversing as if they had been acquainted for years.

Frank and Ralph, who had eaten nothing since early in the morning, fell to work to prepare dinner. Hicks would have assisted, but the boys insisted that he should claim the privilege of guest and be waited upon instead of helping with the work.

"Just as you say, youngsters," he said. "I ain't so very work brittle, and would rather talk than work, any time."

"Then you may talk to us while we get supper," said Frank. "Maybe you will tell us something of your life out in this wild country. It is new and strange to us."

"Well, it's a little strange to me, and I've been knocking about the frontier for a good many years. One never learns it all, you can depend on that."

"Have you been to the gold fields?" asked Ralph.

"Yes, I spent three years in California, in and about the mines, sometimes prospecting for gold, and sometimes watching others lose their money. It's mighty uncertain business, this searching for gold, and while pluck will often win, there's a whole lot in luck, and that cannot be denied. So you youngsters are headed toward the gold fields, are you?"

"How did you guess?" asked Frank.

"Oh, I happened to hear you and your friend talking over your plans. Maybe it wasn't just the right thing to eavesdrop in this way, but I make it a rule to find out something about people who come into this little nook before I appear in person. It isn't because I want to pry into other people's business, but it is for self-protection. It stands me in hand to take the measure of every outfit that hits this place before I show myself, and then I can judge whether they come as friend or foe."

"I'm sure I don't blame you for that," replied Frank. "And do you make this valley your home? I hope you won't think me inquisitive, but we have been over the whole valley, it seems to me, and we have seen no sign of your place of abode."

"I'm not surprised at that," laughed Hicks. "Others who have happened this way have met with the same experience. But after supper, if you boys are willing, I'll show you my quarters."

CHAPTER VII.

MORTIMER KING, ATTORNEY AT LAW.

We must now go back a month or so, and take up another thread in the fabric of our story.

In order to do this we must take the reader back across the wide stretch of plains to a town sitting amid unsightly bluffs at the mouth of the Kaw River—a town which was first known as Westport Landing, but which later received the name of Kansas City.

In the upper story of a building of red, dirty bricks, in a dingy office, sat Mortimer King, attorney at law.

At present he was occupied with nothing more important than the trimming of his finger nails, pausing now and then in his occupation to gaze through the open window at the dingy buildings hovering about the dizzy slopes.

As he sat thus, he was meditating on the uncertainties of the affairs of life. As an attorney at law he had not prospered, and the cases which came to him by way of the Police Court were not, as a rule, highly remunerative.

Gamblers, thugs and crooks, human vermin that swarmed about the boats that plied between Kansas City and St. Louis, constituted the whole of his clients.

He despised them, but so long as they fed him and paid his rent he was compelled to defend them against the hand of the law. He had dreams of more sumptuous quarters, of a different class of clients, but that dream had never been realized.

It is a long road that has no turn, and yet Mortimer King could see no turn in his own road to fortune.

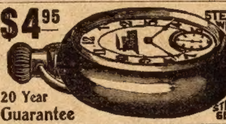
He had just finished a most stubborn fight for a gambler who had been brought into the Criminal Court charged with swindling. Newton Porter was a professional crook, as well as a gambler and swindler, and unfortunately for his lawyer, was almost broke when arrested.

"I have only ten dollars to pay you now," he told Mortimer King, "but I shall remember you when I am flush again. You know enough of me to be reasonably sure that I will keep my word. Meantime, if I can be of any service to you in any way, let me know."

Mortimer thought little of the gambler's word at the time, but later, he had occasion to remember.

He was about to leave the office when he heard a step approaching. The door opened and his office boy entered bringing a couple of papers and a single letter.

The latter was enclosed in a large official envelope and in the upper left hand



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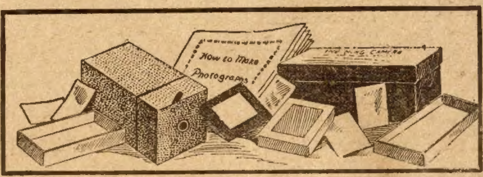

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Any lady or gentleman wishing to correspond with the opposite sex for fun, pastime or improvement, should write at once to us. We have a large list of persons wishing to correspond. We introduce you by mail. Many pleasant flirtations and warm friends are arranged through us. Everything strictly confidential. We refer to this paper. Address with stamp for reply and membership blanks, Lock Box 259,
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swering advertisements you wil
vertiser and the publishers by
The Chicago Ledger.

corner was printed "Hamilton & Gore, Attorneys at Law, St. Louis, Mo."

A low, prolonged whistle came from the lawyer's lips.

"Hamilton & Gore!" he ejaculated. "What in thunder can they want of me?"

He tore open the envelope with feverish haste, and unfolding the letter he drew forth, he read:

"Office of Hamilton & Gore,
Attorneys at Law,
St. Louis, Mo.

"Mortimer King, Attorney at Law,
Kansas City, Mo.

"My dear Sir: We have dispatched a messenger to you, and as he goes on the same boat which will carry this letter, you may expect him immediately upon receipt of this. The business with you is of such a character and of such importance that we have decided to transact it through a special messenger, Mr. Nevius Fenn, who will explain all the details fully and act for us.

"After meeting our messenger we should be glad to have you notify us immediately by letter.

"We are, my dear sir, your obedient servants,
HAMILTON & GORE."

"Well, I'll be blowed!" ejaculated King, a puzzled look on his face. "Can it be that some one has left me a fortune—or have the great Hamilton & Gore decided to take me into partnership with them?"

The business on which they had written must be of more than passing importance else the lawyers would not have taken the trouble to send a special messenger all the way from St. Louis. These thoughts were passing through the young lawyer's mind when he was roused by a knock at the door.

He threw it open and a man of some thitry-five entered. He was faultlessly clad and a diamond stud glittered in his immaculate shirt front. He was of spare build, but of good proportions. His features were clear-cut, his chin firm and resolute, and his eyes of a deep gray that indicated shrewdness.

"This is Mr. Mortimer King, the attorney at law, I believe," he said, extending his hand.

Mortimer bowed assent as he took the extended hand.

"My name is Nevius Fenn," went on the visitor, "and I come from Messrs Hamilton & Gore, attorneys at law, St. Louis.'

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Fenn,' said Mortimer, pushing a chair for the other's accommodation. "I have just received a letter from the attorneys apprising me of your intended visit. Pray be seated."

"Thank you. I hope you will pardon my asking you certain questions before I make known the business that brought me. You will understand that this is merely a form that must be adhered to, as it is necessary at the outset."

"Certainly, certainly," responded Mortimer. "I fully understand. You may proceed."

"Have you any relatives on your mother's side, living?"

"None that I know of. There was only one, and I have heard nothing from him for years."

"What was his name?"

"Dennis Black."

"Where did he reside when last heard from?"

"In St. Louis."

"What relation was he to you?"

"An uncle."

"What business was he engaged in in St. Louis?"

"Real estate."

"Had he a partner?'

"Yes, a man by the name of Robert Tipton."

"How long has it been since you heard from your uncle?"

"Some twelve years—may be longer. He got into some sort of difficulty with his partner and left the city. I never learned the particulars."

"Exactly. You have never heard of him since he left St. Louis?"

"Not a word."

"Your answers to my questions, Mr. King, are entirely satisfactory, and I am glad of it. Messrs. Hamilton & Gore have recently heard from your uncle through his attorneys in San Francisco, and I regret to inform you that he died a short time ago. It is my my pleasure, however, to acquaint you with the fact that he left a considerable amount of property, something like ten thousand in real estate and fifty thousand dollars in Government bonds."

A sudden light burned in the face of Mortimer King.

"Is it possible?" he cried. "Did he leave a will?"

"That is what I am coming to," replied Fenn. "He made a will leaving all his estate, real and personal, to yourself, you being his only living relative."

Mortimer could hardly suppress a cry of intense joy that half rose to his lips. His face beamed with a greedy light.

"This is, indeed, important news to me," he said.

"I congratulate you on your good fortune," said Fenn, "and I trust you may live long to enjoy the fruits of it. But I wish to mention that there is a clause in the will which provides that forty thousand dollars shall be paid to his former partner, Robert Tipton, or his heirs. But in case Robert Tipton should not be living, and had left no heirs, the entire estate should go to yourself."

"Is—is Robert Tipton alive?" asked Mortimer, a white look coming into his face.

"We have inquired into the matter and find that Robert Tipton died some ten years ago. His wife died some years before."

The face of the young lawyer brightened.

"And did they leave no children?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Yes, a son, who, I think, should be about sixteen years old. He was adopted, or taken to raise, it seems, by a man by the name of Caleb Wilson. Wilson lived on a little farm some twenty miles from here, near Independence."

"And the boy is there, now?"

"No, for Wilson, it appears, sold his farm and took the boy with him and started for the West, but a short time ago. As far as we could learn, they were headed for the gold fields, but further inquiry developed the fact that they were in Council Grove, waiting to join some train bound for Santa Fe."

"And you have heard nothing further?"

"No."

"What claims did this Tipton have on my uncle that he should have the lion's share of the estate?" asked Mortimer.

"That point is made clear enough in the will. It is a delicate matter to mention, but it appears that your uncle had wronged Tipton out of a large sum of money, and in his will Dennis Black desired to make restitution."

A black look came into the young lawyer's face, and for a moment he was absorbed in deep thought.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming year many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already taking this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It only costs you $1.00, and we will send you in addition, entirely without cost, one of our King Cameras or any six patterns that you may select from our list of winter patterns, or one of our fine knit woolen shawls. See our premium advertisements in this issue.

Invent Rudder for Airship.

Who has a rudder for a balloon? Santos-Dumont finds it impossible to steer an airship because of the absence of the denser medium for the rudder which the water provides in the water craft. Students of aeronautics at present find it impossible to equip a balloon with any means of self-propulsion that will make it independent of the wind. The average speed of the wind as shown by observations at such a station as that of the Eiffel tower is about eighteen miles an hour.

In order that a balloon may be able to travel in any direction at twenty miles an hour in average weather it must have a mean speed of thirty-eight miles an hour in still air. Any person who has traveled at this speed in an automobile knows that the intensity of the wind thus set up would shipwreck a fragile fabric like a balloon. The balloon would have to be made of a material as rigid as steel in order to attain such a speed, and it would then be deprived of its lifting power because of its great weight. A practical flying machine must be heavier than air and must depend for its power to rise on the resistance of the atmosphere. It must fly, not like a balloon, but like a kite.

The French government is said to have the only machine which can be guided and balanced in the air and can descend without disaster. However, judgment has to be suspended regarding this machine because as yet there have been no properly authenticated trials, although there is good scientific ground for believing in the achievements attributed to it.

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Little Nina—Say, mamma!

Mamma—Well, what is it, dear?

Little Nina—Where do kittens learn to act like kittens?

"Now, boys," said the teacher of the juvenile class, "can any of you give a proof of your own that the earth is not flat?"

"I can," replied the brght chap at the foot of the bench. "If it was flat you could see the North Pole with a telescope."

Small Gilbert—Papa, didn't I hear you tell mama we would have to economize?

Papa—Yes, my son.

Small Gilbert—Well, you might begin by getting me a pony, then I shouldn't wear out so many shoes.

Little Floyd—Why didn't you kill that old hen, Mr. Meeker.

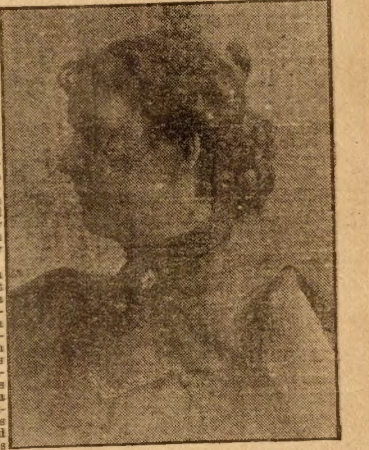
Mr. Meeker—What old hen do you mean, my boy?

Little Floyd—The one that pecks you. I heard mamma say you had been henpecked ever since you got married.

The Secret of Woman's Beauty

"The secret of a woman's beauty is not to be found in her dressing-room or in the use of cosmetics, as cynics might intimate," says Max O'Rell, "but lies in resplendent health and a cheerful mind."

No woman can feel cheerful or look healthy who is dragged down with the disorders peculiarly feminine—with those symptoms of backache—bearing down pains—weakness and nervous irritability which make a woman despondent and utterly wretched.



Mrs. G. D. PETERSON.

The fact is a woman can't look beautiful that is dragged down with pains at regular intervals, who suffers from headaches, or backaches, frequently. Such a woman soon acquires wrinkles, a sallow complexion, dark circles about the eyes, and a general feeling of weakness, which brings misery of mind and body. To keep one's good looks the body must be healthy—the feminine functions must be regular. Woman was not intended to suffer, and there is no reason why she should. A healthy body will usually be a shapely body, and no means at hand will more quickly restore the womanly functions to a healthy state than Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription.

Dr. Pierce, during a long period of practice, found that this prescription made entirely of native medicinal roots without the use of alcohol, was positive in its action. After using this remedy for many years in his private practice he put it up in a form that would make it easily procurable, and it can be had at any store where medicines are handled.

If a woman has bearing down, or dragging pains, low down in the abdomen, or pelvis, backache, frequent headaches, dizzy or fainting spells, is nervous and easily startled, has gnawing feeling in stomach, sees imaginary floating specks, or spots before her eyes, has melancholia, or "blues," or a weakening disagreeable drain from pelvic organs, she can make no mistake by resorting to the use of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It will invigorate and tone up the whole system and especially the pelvic organs.

As a powerful invigorating tonic, "Favorite Prescription" imparts strength to the whole system and to the organs distinctly feminine in particular. For over-worked, "worn-out," run-down," debilitated teachers, milliners, dressmakers, seamstresses, "shop-girls," house-keepers, nursing mothers, and feeble women generally, Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the greatest earthly boon, being unequaled as an appetizing cordial and restorative tonic.

All suffering women are invited to consult by letter *free of charge.* All letters of consultation are held as strictly private and sacredly confidential and all answers are returned in plain, sealed envelopes. Address: World's Dispensary Medical Association, Dr. R. V. Pierce, Pres., Buffalo, N.Y.

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets cure constipation. Constipation is the cause of many diseases. Cure the cause and you cure the disease. One "Pellet" is a gentle laxative, and two a mild cathartic. Druggists sell them, and nothing is "just as good." They are the *original* Little Liver Pills first put up by old Dr. Pierce over 40 years ago. Much imitated, but never equaled. They are tiny sugar-coated granules—easy to take as candy.

Dr. Pierce's great thousand-page illustrated Common Sense Medical Adviser will be sent free, paper-bound, for 21 one-cent stamps, or cloth-bound for 31 stamps. Address Dr. Pierce, as above.

The above portrait hardly does Mrs. Peterson justice—yet her eyes are bright, her face ruddy with health and she is animated with "the best of health and spirits" as she says in the following letter:

Seven years ago, after a severe illness with nervous prostration, and still suffering with a weakness peculiar to women and its accompanying ills of dyspepsia and constipation, for which I tried other remedies which gave no permanent relief, and then a well-known specialist who likewise did not succeed in restoring me to my former good health, so finally I wrote to Dr. R. V. Pierce of Buffalo, N. Y., and through his kindly advice soon realized the complete restoration of the best of health and spirits. All, through the magic curative powers of but two bottles each of "Golden Medical Discovery" and "Favorite Prescription," accompanied by some of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. Your remedies are *invaluable*, and a blessing to mankind.

Very gratefully yours,
MRS. G. D. PETERSON.

NOTE—We will send address to those desiring to write Mrs. Peterson or others who have been cured.

The Crime of the Black Thirteen.

(Continued from page eleven.)

what I could I do? I was swept along like an avarlanche. Then I saw what the trouble was. The enemy (there must have been twelve to fifteen of 'em) was running off with my wagin. We fired about a dozen shots, and they fired about a dozen more, and helter-skelter we went after them till they turned down a lane. In getting into the woods we got mixed a little, and finally lost 'em."

"The woods! What woods?" questioned Jones.

"Do you know where the old Deltoid Hall is?"

"Yes."

"Well, near there. I could never very well make out how they disappeared, and can't yet, for we searched the woods from end to end, and couldn't as much as a squint of 'em. Then I said to the soger: 'Look here, soger,' said I, 'what if we go back and look about the old Deltoid Hall grounds. If we can corner them anywhere we can corner 'em there; let's go and see, anyhow,' said I."

"What did Snorer say to that?" asked Jones.

"What did he say? Why, you couldn't get him or any of the rest to go within a mile of it."

"Why?"

"Because, they say the Hall is haunted. Well, I hain't no sich believer in ghosts as to have that rammed down my throat, so I up and says: 'I'll go myself. You gents can go back if you've a mind; but I'm a going to investigate, says I.'

"Just as I said it we was startled by an almighty groan, and who should come plumping in on us as from among the trees but poor Shilo, and he was bleeding awful. We hadn't missed him up to this.

"'What's the matter, Shilo?' said I. 'Are you hurt bad, boy?'

"'Yes—guess I'm all in,' said Shilo; and with that he spun round and fell on his face. We all thought he was dead. One of the boys turned him over on his back, while another forced a drop of whisky down his throat. He recovered some, and said just half-a-dozen words—just like I'm saying now—'Deltoid Hall—de-tec-tive, en-gin-eer—wag-in.' 'Wagin' was the last word the poor fellow said. In another instant he fell back, dead."

Ernest Blandford waited to hear no more. He had a clue at last as to how Porter and Lumley had been spirited away, and one that he thought he fully comprehended. With this coursing through his brain the detective paid his bill and left the restaurant.

This powerful story of treachery and vengeance will be continued in the next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during this year. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over. Our splendid patterns and King cameras, or one of our knit woolen shawls will be sent to you without cost. See announcement on other pages of this issue.

SPOONER WAS DISCOURAGED.

BY MAX ADELER.

Mr. Cooley had a nephew, named Spooner, who had just left the divinity-school and entered the ministry. Mr. Spooner has been staying in town on a visit, and the other day he came into the grocery store while Captain Hubbs was sitting there. The captain opened a conversation with him, something like the following:

Captain—Got a church somewhere, I reckon?

Spooner—No, I am going out as a missionary.

Captain—Where to?

Spooner—To the Navigator Islands. I sail in October.

Captain (shaking his head mournfully)—Pore young man! Pore young man! It is too bad, too bad, indeed. Going to the Navigator Islands? Not married, I reckon? No? Ah, so much the better. No wife and children to make widders ond orphans of. But it's sad, anyway. A promising young feller like you. My heart bleeds for you!

Spooner—What d'you mean?

Captain—Oh, nothing. I don't want to skeer you. I know you're doing it from a sense of duty. But I've been there, to them Navigator Islands, and I'm acquainted with the people's little ways, and I—well, I—I—the fact is, you see, that—well, sooner'n disguise the truth, I don't mind telling you straight out that the last day I was there the folks et one of my legs—sawed it off an' et it. Now, you can see how things are yourself. Them Navigators just gobbled that leg right up. It was a leg a good deal like yours, only heavier, I reckon.

Spooner—You astonish me!

Captain—Oh, that ain't nothing. They did that just for a little bit of fun. The chief he told me the day before that they never et nothing but human beings. He said his family consumed about three a day all the year round, counting holidays and Sundays. He was a light eater himself, he said, on account of gitting dyspepsia from a tough nigger that he et in 1887; but the girls and the old woman, so he said, were very hearty eaters, and it kept him busy prowling around after human beings to satisfy 'em. The old woman, he said, rather preferred to eat babies, on account of her teeth being poor; but the girls, they could chaw up the grizzliest sailor that ever went aboard ship.

Spooner—This is frightful!

Captain—And the chief said sometimes the supply was awful scarce, but lately they had begun to depend more on imported goods than on the home products. And they were better, anyhow, for all the folks preferred white meat. He said the missionary societies, were shipping them some nice lots of provender, and the tears came in his eyes when he said how good they were to the poor, friendless savage away off on a distant island. He said he liked a missionary not too old or too young, but —— Let's see, what's your age, did you say?

Spooner—I am twenty-eight.

Captain—I think he mentioned twenty-seven; but howsomedever, he liked 'em old enough to be solid, and young enough to be tender. And he said he liked missionaries because they never used no rum or tobacco, and always kept their flavor. I know I seen one young feller who came out there from Boston. He got up a kinder camp-meeting in the wood, and while he was giving out the hymn, one of the congregation banged him on the head with a club, and in less than no time he was sizzling over a fire, right in front of the pulpit. They lit the fire with his hymn-book, and kept her going with his sermons. He was a man just about your build—a little leaner'n you, maybe. And they like a man to be stoutish. He eats more tender.

Spooner—I had no idea that such awful practices existed!

Captain—I haven't told you half, for I don't want to discourage you. I know you mean well, and maybe they'll let you alone. But I remember the chief asked me about the divinity-school, and when I told him that there was a whole lot of you fellers studying there to be missionaries, he laughed, and rubbed his hands, and ordered the old woman to plant more horseradish and onions the following year. He was a forehanded kind of a man for a mere pagan. He said that if they would only give his tribe time, if they would only send along the supplies regular, so's not to glut the market, they could put away the entire clergy of the United States and half the deacons, without an effort. He was nibbling at a missionary-bone when he spoke, and the old woman was making a new club out of another one. They are an economical people. They utilize everything.

Spooner—This is the most painful intelligence that I have ever received! If I felt certain about it I would remain at home.

Captain—Don't let me induce you to throw the thing up. I wouldn't 'a' told you, anyway, only you kinder drawed the information out of me. And as long as I've gone this far I might as well tell you that I got a letter the other day from a man who'd just come from there, and he said the crops were short, eatable people were scarce, and not one of them savages had had a square meal for months. When he left they were sitting on the rocks, hungry as thunder, waiting for a missionary society ship to arrive. And now I must be going. Good-by. I know I'll never see you again. Take a last look at me, and don't holler when they put you on the gridiron. Good-morning.

Then the captain hobbled out.

Mr. Spooner has concluded to stay at home and teach school.

Charm of Manner

Why is beauty alone not enough? This is a woman's query of herself, and it is but natural it should be answered by woman. This is what a woman writer has to suggest on the subject:

The greatest sorceresses in the world's history, she says, the women whose influence over men has been the most universal, have not been remarkable for their beauty. When they possessed beauty it was but one of their charms. Throughout all the past the women who have "made history" were women of great charm of manner, and great tact, women who understood how to interest men.

Physical charm does not always depend upon beauty of feature. Many of the most fascinating women in the world's history—women who have inspired great loves and helped mold the destiny of nations—were devoid of actual beauty. But they possessed the charm of manner and of expression and the subtle, magnetic quality which leave the impression of beauty upon the beholder. When beauty of face and form is supplemented by these attributes the world gives way before it. When it is devoid of them it is often as ineffectual as a snow image to arouse more than passing notice.

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BE SURE AND GIVE THE SIZE.

5840 Child's Night Drawers, 2 to 8 Years.
A healthy and comfortable sleeping garment for a child.

5837 Muff, Collarette and Scarf, One Size.
Nothing gives a greater sense of warmth and comfort than a fur scarf and muff.

5823 Fancy Waist with Low or High Neck, 32 to 40 Bust.
Such a round neck bodice as this one is very generally becoming.

5849 Blouse or Shirt Waist, 32 to 42 Bust.
To be made with long or three-quarter sleeves. The plain tailored waist never goes out of style.

5835 Fitted Corset Cover, 32 to 44 Bust.
The plain fitted corset cover suits many figures better than any other sort and is in fact the most desirable beneath any smoothly fitting gown.

5836 Girl's Dress, 6 to 12 Years.
An exceedingly pretty frock for little girls.

5795 Girl's Yoke Dress with Bertha, 6 to 12 Years.
To be made with round or high neck, with or without the bertha.

5831 Child's Empire Frock, 2, 4 and 6 Years.
With separate guimpe that can be made with short or long sleeves.

5820 Girl's Dress with Guimpe, 6 to 12 Years.
The guimpe can be made with either elbow or three-quarter sleeves,

5813 Girl's Coat, 8 to 14 Years.
Long loose coats make most becoming wraps for growing girls and are to be noted in a variety of attractive colors and materials.

5796 Misses' Cutaway Coat, 14 and 16 Years.
Unquestionably cutaway coats are favorites of the season and many exceedingly smart variations are shown.

5793 Child's Coat with Shield, 2 to 6 Years.
The long coat, that covers the frock, is the favorite for little children and is seen in cloth of all colors, in velvet, velveteen, corduroy and cheviot.

5846 Boy's Shirt Waist, 4 to 12 Years.
To be made with attached roll-over or separate high collar.

5845 "Buster Brown" Suit, 2 to 8 Years.
There is no suit that the small boy wears that pleases him better than this one which is masculine enough to satisfy his ambitions while it is childish enough to please his mamma.

5847 Five Gored Skirt, 22 to 32 Waist.
To be made in round or walking length, with inverted plaits or habit back

5828 Seven Gored Skirt, 22 to 32 Waist.
The plain gored flared skirt is always a graceful and becoming one and this season will have extended vogue.

5792 Nine Gored Skirt with Panels, 22 to 30 Waist.
The skirt that is made with panels is a favorite among the latest models and has much to commend it.

5816 Seven Gored Skirt, 22 to 30 Waist.
It is eminently graceful, takes long and beautiful lines and can be trimmed to give the tunic, or shawl, suggestion very easily and readily.

5825 Semi-Fitted Coat, 34 to 42 Bust.
The semi-fitted coat is always a becoming and satisfactory one.

5797 Princess Gown, 32 to 40 Bust.
To be made in round or walking length. The princess gown always is a graceful and attractive one and just now it is high in favor with la mode.

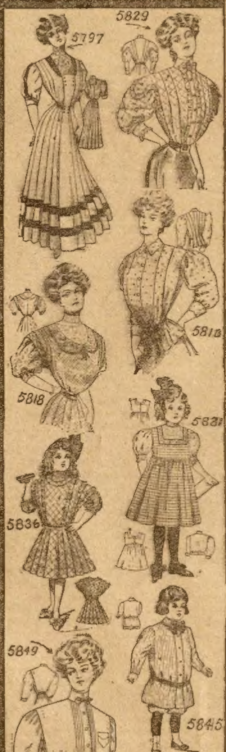
5810 Box Plaited House Jacket, 32 to 42 Bust.
To be made with three-quarter or long sleeves. Simple house jackets are always in demand for they fill a definite, practical need.

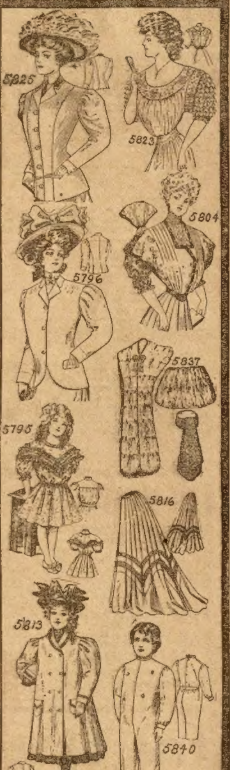
5818 Over Blouse or Jumper, 32 to 40 Bust.
The over blouse is made in one piece and is tucked over the shoulders, the sleeves being cut in one with it.

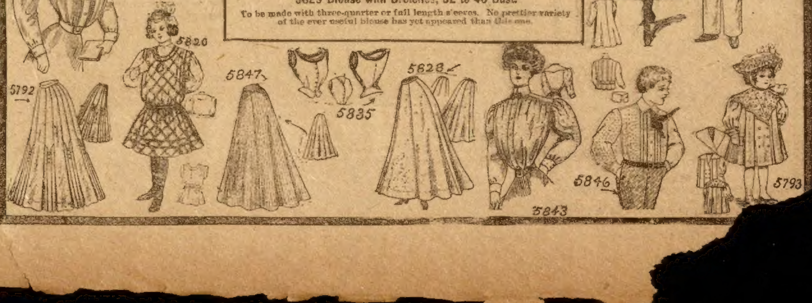
5843 Blouse or Shirt Waist, 32 to 42 Bust.
To be made with or without the yoke, at back. The plain tailored shirt waist is always needed.

5804 Over Blouse or Jumper, 32 to 40 Bust.
Each new variation of the over blouse seems a bit more attractive than the last and each one is certain to find a place in the wardrobe.

5829 Blouse with Bretelles, 32 to 40 Bust.
To be made with three-quarter or full length sleeves. No prettier variety of the ever useful blouse has yet appeared than this one.







What He Meant.

The embryo statesman had just announced that he would rather be right than be president.

"Meaning president of the United States?" we inquired.

"Oh, no," he hastened to explain. "I referred to the presidency of a company that paid no salaries."

No Chance for Her.

Newpop—Did you tell Mrs. Flatleigh that the baby had a tooth?

Mrs. Newpop—No, I didn't get a chance. Her husband presented her with a poodle yesterday.

Taking No Risks.

He had just proposed and she had given him the welcome hand.

"Of course," she said, "you will interview papa tomorrow?"

"Yes—er—I suppose so," replied the young man. "By the way, what's his—er—telephone number?"

Early View of a Genius.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is a genius?

Pa—A genius, my son, is a man who, as a boy, the neighbors said would never amount to anything.

Not for Her.

"My motto," said the new arrival, "is 'Pay as you go.'"

"It wouldn't do in my business," rejoined the landlady. "My terms are cash in advance."

Misjudged.

Miss DePlayne—Papa declares I am his greatest treasure.

Mr. Blunt—Indeed! Then he isn't as wealthy as I supposed.

Where He Might Go.

Mrs. DeSwell—Professor Wigwag tells me he is going to make a study of the monkey language.

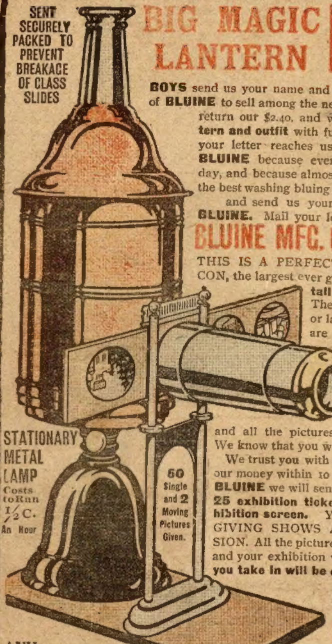
Mr. Knox—Indeed! Is he going into society or to Africa?

"And can you remember President Lincoln, grandpa?" queried small Eloise.

"Yes, dear, I remember him quite well," replied the old gentleman. "You see, I am a good deal older than you are."

"And how much older will I have to be before I can remember him?" asked the little inquisitor.

BIG MAGIC LANTERN FREE!


SENT SECURELY PACKED TO PREVENT BREAKAGE OF GLASS SLIDES
STATIONARY METAL LAMP Costs to Run 1/2 C. An Hour
50 Single and 2 Moving Pictures Given.

BOYS send us your name and address for only 24 packages of **BLUINE** to sell among the neighbors at 10 cents a package, return our $2.40, and we will send the **Magic Lantern and outfit** with full instructions just as soon as your letter reaches us. You can easily sell the **BLUINE** because every housewife uses it on wash day, and because almost everybody knows that it is the best washing bluing in the world. **Sit right down** and send us your name and address for the **BLUINE.** Mail your letter to

BLUINE MFG. CO., 721 Mill Street, Concord Junction, Mass.

THIS IS A PERFECT GERMAN STEREOPTICON, the largest ever given away. **It is over a foot tall and half a foot through.** The lamp either burns kerosene or lard oil. The adjustable lenses are double telescopic and they make very large, clear pictures. We give with the lantern, 50 colored pictures, and two continuous moving picture slides' many are comic, and all the pictures are different and all new. We know that you will he delighted with them.

We trust you with the **BLUINE.** If you return our money within 10 days after the receipt of the **BLUINE** we will send you **free with the lantern 25 exhibition tickets and a large, white exhibition screen.** YOU CAN MAKE MONEY GIVING SHOWS AND CHARGING ADMISSION. All the pictures will show large and bright, and your exhibition will be a great success. **All you take in will be clear profit.** Just say that you want the lantern and outfit and send your name and address to

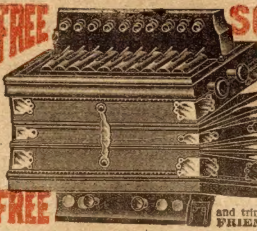
BLUINE MFG. CO.,
432 MILL STREET,
CONCORD JUNCTION, MASS.

ANY BOY CAN HAVE THIS LANTERN.

(We are the Old Reliable Firm.)

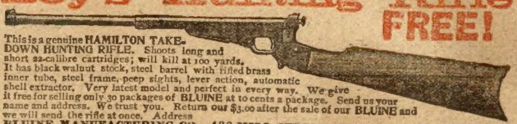
We also give Baseball Outfits, Athletic Goods, Watches, Furs, Accordeons and many other premiums.

FREE SOLO ACCORDION FREE



a full-voiced musical instrument, beautiful in tone and appearance, and suitable for furnishing music for entertainments, dances, etc. It is a very popular instrument and brings a high price in all the stores. **We give it away absolutely free** for selling only two dozen pieces of our exclusively designed, swell Jewelry. Nobody will refuse to buy of you, as our Jewelry is genuine gold plate and the best people wear our goods. Sell the Jewelry at 10 cents apiece and return our $2.40, and we will send the Accordion at once and guarantee satisfaction. This is not a cheap toy. It is a perfect instrument with ten keys, two stops, **double bellows, ebonized case and nickel-plated valves** and trimmings. You will be delighted with it. Address **FRIEND SUPPLY CO., Dept. 724 Boston, Mass.**

Boy's Hunting Rifle FREE!



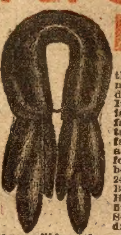
This is a genuine **HAMILTON TAKE-DOWN HUNTING RIFLE.** Shoots long and short 22-calibre cartridges; will kill at 100 yards. It has black walnut stock, steel barrel with rifled brass inner tube, steel frame, peep sights, lever action, automatic shell extractor. Very latest model and perfect in every way. We give it free for selling only 30 packages of BLUINE at 10 cents a package. Send us your name and address. We trust you. Return our $3.00 after the sale of our BLUINE and we will send the rifle at once. Address

BLUINE MANUFACTURING CO., 436 MILL STREET, CONCORD JUNCTION, MASS.

FREE GOLD WATCH AND RING FREE

An American Movement Watch with **Gold** Plated Case, warranted to keep correct time, similar in appearance to a Solid Gold Watch warranted for 25 years; also a Gold Filled Ring set with a Sparkling Gem, both given free for selling only 24 Jewelry Novelties, at 10c. each. Send your name and address for Jewelry. When sold send us the $2.40 and we send you the watch and ring. **FRIEND SUPPLY CO., Dept. 722 Boston, Mass.**

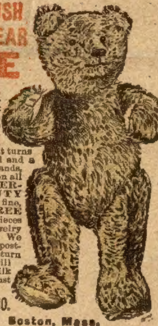
Fur Scarf FREE



We are giving away free this handsome fur scarf, nearly 1 1-2 yards long of dark heavy Baltic Seal. It is warm and dressy and is made in the stylish fashion with six heavy tabs and a pretty chain fastening. The fur is rich and elegant and will wear for years. We give this beautiful scarf for selling 24 packages of Quaker Bluing at 10 cents each. Housewives buy this fine Bluing quickly. Send your name and address for the Bluing now so you will have the scarf when cool weather comes. Sell the Bluing return our $2.40 and we will send the Scarf and an extra present FREE of a Gold Filled Ring set with a sparkling stone.

Address **Friend Soap Co.,**
Dept. 726 Boston, Mass.

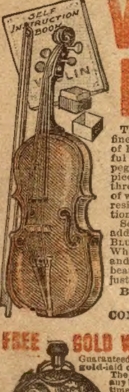
SILK PLUSH TEDDY BEAR FREE



This is a beautiful, genuine, rich golden-yellow silk plush Teddy Bear, good size with fine large body, movable arms and legs, comical head that turns all the way round and a funny squeak. It stands, sits down or goes on all fours. **IT'S A PERFECT BEAUTY** and we give this fine, expensive bear **FREE** for selling only 24 pieces of our new Art Jewelry at 10 cents apiece. We send the Jewelry postpaid. When sold return our $2.40 and we will send this elegant silk plush Teddy Bear just as promised.

FRIEND SUPPLY CO.
Dept. 723, Boston, Mass.

VIOLIN FREE



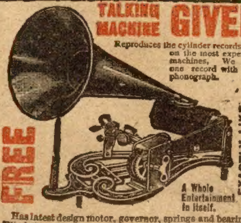
This is a large, handsome, fine toned, full-size Violin of highly polished, beautiful wood, ebony finished pegs, finger board and tail piece, one silver string, three gut strings, long bow of white horse hair, box of resin and fine self-instruction book.

Send us your name and address for 24 packages of BLUINE to sell at 10c. each. When sold return our $2.40 and we will send you this beautiful Violin and outfit just exactly as represented.

BLUINE MFG. CO.,
435 Mill Street,
CONCORD JCT., MASS.

TALKING MACHINE GIVEN

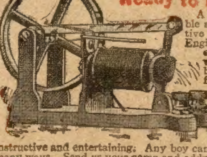
Reproduces the cylinder records used on the most expensive machines. We send one record with each phonograph.



Has latest design motor, governor, springs and bearings. Wind the motor spring and move the start lever, and the governor regulates the speed. Absolutely the most valuable talking machine ever offered. We give it free for selling only 40 packages of BLUINE at 10 cents a package. BLUINE sells very easily. Send us your name and address. We trust you and send your talking machine and Columbia record the same day that you return our $4.00 received from the sale. We guarantee satisfaction. **BLUINE MFG. CO., 433 Mill St., Concord Junction, Mass.**

FREE! Electric Engine

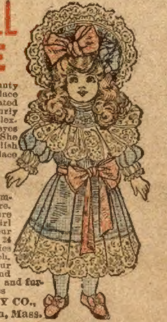
With Battery Ready to Run



A remarkable and effective Electric Engine. Runs either forward or backward, fast or slow, to 3000 revolutions a minute Very instructive and entertaining. Any boy can use it in many ways. Send us your name and address for 24 pieces of Jewelry. Return $2.40 when sold and we will ship this engine and battery complete. Address

COLUMBIA NOVELTY CO.,
Dept. 492 East Boston, Mass.

BIG DOLL FREE



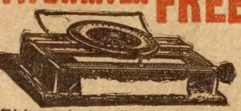
This is a great big beauty Doll, dressed in satin, lace and ribbon, with pointed body, bisque head, curly hair and lovely complexion. She closes her eyes when she lies down. She wears a beautiful, stylish dress, big picture hat, lace trimmed underwear, dainty slippers and stockings, that take off. We also give with her a pretty set of Bamboo Doll's Furniture. This doll and furniture are just what every girl wants. Send us your name and address for 24 of our Jewelry Novelties to sell at 10 cents each. When sold return our $2.40 and we will send you this beautiful doll and furniture at once. Address

FRIEND SUPPLY CO.,
Dept. 725, Boston, Mass.

FREE GOLD WATCH AND RING FREE

Guaranteed American Watch with gold-laid case beautifully engraved. The manufacturers will repair any breaks for one year. Perfect time-keeper; very thin. With it comes a handsome gold band Ring which will wear for years. Send us your name and address for only 24 packages of **BLUINE** to sell at 10c. a package. Return our $2.40 and we will at once send you the Gold Watch and any size Ring you select. **BLUINE MFG. CO. 434 Mill St. Concord Junction, Mass.**

TYPEWRITER FREE



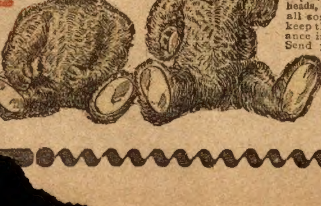
This is a genuine typewriter, a valuable, thoroughly useful and really beautiful machine. With it you can write business letters, print announcements and tickets, and **earn money in various ways.** Is self-inking, self-spacing, and does splendid work. We give it for selling only 24 Jewelry Novelties at 10c each. Send your name and address for Jewelry. When sold send us the $2.40 and we will send the Typewriter.

FRIEND SUPPLY CO., Dept. 727 Boston, Mass.

FREE

Send name and address for 12 pieces of jewelry to sell at 10 cents each. When sold return us the $1.20 and we will send you these two **Solid Gold** laid Rings, any size and initial. **BEST RING CO., Dept. 22 BOSTON, MASS.**

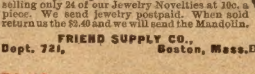
FREE 2 TEDDY BEARS and whole Play Suit FREE



The cutest and best two Teddy Bears ever given away. Any little boy or girl will hug them with delight and never tire of them as playmates. These are **imported bears and of best make. Their heads, arms and legs** can be moved into all sorts of comical positions. They keep their shape and their furry appearance in spite of the roughest handling. Send your name and address for 24 pieces of jewelry to sell at 10 cents each. When sold, send us the $2.40 and we will send both bears without delay. **As an extra premium we give a Play Suit and College Hat for the Bears.**

COLUMBIA NOVELTY CO.
Dept. 490 East Boston, Mass.

MANDOLIN FREE



This is a beautiful, genuine, first-class Mandolin, well and carefully made, and more durable than a $10 instrument. Has a sweet tone, full number of frets and position dots. **We give it together with a Self Instruction Book for** selling only 24 of our Jewelry Novelties at 10c. a piece. We send jewelry postpaid. When sold return us the $2.40 and we will send the Mandolin.

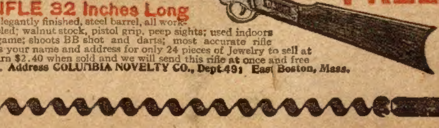
FRIEND SUPPLY CO.,
Dept. 721, Boston, Mass.

FREE GOLD WATCH AND RING FREE

An American Movement Watch with Solid Gold-Plated case, warranted to keep correct time; equal in appearance to a Solid Gold Watch warranted for 25 years; also a Gold-Filled Ring, set with a Sparkling Gem, are given free to any one for selling only 24 Jewelry Novelties at 10 cents each. Send name and address for Jewelry. When sold, send us the $2.40 and we send you the Gold Watch and Ring. Write today. Address

COLUMBIA NOVELTY CO.
Dept. 489 East Boston, Mass.

BOY'S AIR-RIFLE 32 Inches Long FREE



weighs 2 lbs.; elegantly finished, steel barrel, all working parts nickeled; walnut stock, pistol grip, peep sights; used indoors or for killing game; shoots BB shot and darts; most accurate rifle made. Send us your name and address for only 24 pieces of Jewelry to sell at 10c. each, return $2.40 when sold and we will send this rifle at once and free supply of shot. **Address COLUMBIA NOVELTY CO., Dept. 491 East Boston, Mass.**